

Approved by

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**INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES SELF-ASSESSMENT
OF THE TERTIARY LEVEL INSTITUTION**

Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsi

Koryun str. 2, 0025, Yerevan, Armenia

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CRITERION 1

Mission and goals

The institution's mission and purpose are in accordance with the relevant reference levels and are consistent with the policies and practices that guide its operations.

Ambitions: *are largely determined by the mission and strategic plan of the University for the reporting period 2008-2012 (2006-2010 Strategic Plan, pp. 3-17, attached; 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, pp.4-6), which aim to:*

- *ensure the implementation of two-cycle higher medical education system for all specialties (General Medicine, Stomatology, Pharmacy, Public Health) in compliance with Armenian National Qualification Framework (ANQF),*
- *be the leading institution in higher, postgraduate (residency) and continuing medical education sphere at national level,*
- *ensure the lifelong development of academic staff,*
- *contribute to the body of knowledge in the priority fields specified by YSMU policies,*
- *promote internationalization of higher, postgraduate education and research activity.*

In the reporting period the trends of the policies and activities undertaken by YSMU were based on two major toolsets, i.e. mapping of toolsets:

a) running the components of European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in line with the requirements set by higher medical education;

b) developing criteria of higher medical education in accordance with the WHO statute in this era of globalization. Based on WHO "Health" definition, in the priorities of the

University strategic plan for 2006-2011 were outlined not only the fundamentals of improvement, innovation and enhancing the effectiveness of medical practice, but also the improvement of the person's (personalized medicine) social and psychological status. In this context it was important to develop the process of founding the Institute of Family Medicine, as well as the establishment of the Public Health Faculty.

The goal of the mentioned self-assessment is the comprehensive evaluation of the university's activities, which standards shall contain the university's goals and perspectives in the light of the graduates and employers' interests. In the mentioned context the surveys have been regularly conducted, the reports, analysis have been presented in different circles, which goal was to evaluate the teachers' performance skills, elucidate the students and external stakeholders' content of the training, analyze the students' opinion on their job-readiness level. Based on the long-term strategic plan the annual agenda of the academic council is drawn up where decisions are adopted based on the results of the discussed issues and which process of implementation is periodically monitored and notified to the academic council by the relevant units.

Based on the results of the annual evaluation, each circle is currently working on the further development plans of its activities/execution and core actions directed to working out the problems.

Standard-1.1. The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's purposes and goals and is in accordance with the ANQF.

The mission of YSMU underpins to educate and train qualified specialists for healthcare system, conduct research in this specific field to serve the society needs (2011-2015 Strategic Plan, p.4, ongoing). To ensure its implementation the university has made a series of reforms in relation to medical education, medical care and research to align the latter with international standards and this is in line with the university strategic plan,

which anticipates modernization of academic programmes and teaching methods; design of student exchange programmes; vigorous reformation of the interim and final/graduation examination system; overall capacity building of the university academic and administrative staff as well as medical staff of respective clinics. Internationalization in general and expansion of international partnership in particular are envisaged by the strategy (2006-2010 Strategic Plan, p.4, attached). To ensure productive implementation of reforms renovation of such facilities as educational buildings, university clinics, and other supporting facilities were planned.

In fact, in 2006, in accordance with the law of RA on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, two-cycle education system was approved in YSMU within higher education. In 2006, the first students were matriculated in Bachelor's studies of the University four faculties (General Medicine, Stomatology, Pharmacy, and Military Medicine, Table 1). In 2010, the first class graduated from the Faculty of Stomatology and the Faculty of Pharmacy, and in 2011, first Bachelor's students graduates of General Medicine and Military Medicine faculties (Table 2); these graduates have attained Bachelor's degree in Medicine, Stomatology and Pharmacy respectively (see the samples of diploma and supplements).

To promote compliance with the developments in the European Higher Education Area, the RA Government ratified the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (ANQF) in 2011, which outlines eight levels of education. Drawing on the ANQF, currently, YSMU methodological committees have been charged with a new task of conducting gap analysis to determine the areas of further development in the academic programmes to respond to the market needs and, therefore, align with the ANQF. International students were not matriculated in two-cycle educational model and they are still educated by the nonstop model (General Medicine 6 years, Stomatology and Pharmacy 5 years), because the countries of their citizenship did not adopt two-cycle medical education system model and there is no need of Bachelor's in those countries.

In accordance with the law of RA on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, the transition of two-cycle education system in the field of medicine was based

on the following philosophy: reallocate the academic programs so that the graduates holding the bachelor's degree will be able to fill up the pre-medical service of the medical care system with more qualified (having different qualification) staff, (e.g., a physician's assistant). In order to organize the training the academic programs were reviewed using the horizontal and vertical integration elements (see cyclic-methodical committees decisions).

The graduates attained Bachelor's degree in accordance with the State Educational Standards of professional qualification by testing knowledge, practical skills and competencies prescribed by professional educational programs (see the state educational standards, academic programs and syllabi, literature, tests, cases).

Bachelor's graduates automatically matriculated in Master's studies (Table 3), where they finally attained Master's degree in Medicine, Stomatology, Pharmacy and Public Health, respectively (see the samples of diploma and supplements). Automatic matriculation in the Master's programme is conditioned by the fact that the labour market in the healthcare sector of the Republic of Armenia is not clearly shaped up to the present and the demand for the medical professional with a BA degree is not clearly formed yet. It is noteworthy, that the generic learning outcomes outlined in the ANQF for both Bachelor's and Master's degrees are not yet applicable in the Medical University education; moreover, discrepancies with the ANQF still prevail. For example, academic descriptors for Master's degree laid out in the ANQF are more in line with the residency education model rather than Master's degree, which is obtained prior to the residency according to current education structure exercised at the Medical University.

Further studies are required to explore the impact of the new academic programmes and achievement of the learning outcomes as well as relevance to the market needs with the ultimate goal of eliminating drawbacks detected in the course of studies and development of the new academic programmes.

Table 1. Admission by academic programmes (local students)

Academic year	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12*
General Medicine	358	428	442	577	560	111
Stomatology	220	149	175	165	225	46
Pharmacy	104	108	159	95	110	10
Military Medicine	33	34	-	-	-	29

* 2011-2012 there are no school graduates (10-year educational model was shifted to 12-year model), hence the number of students enrolled in BA mostly composed of army finished and the ones did not enrolled in the past.

Table 2. The number of Bachelor's graduates laid down by the faculties (local students)

Academic year	2010-11	2011-2012
General Medicine	-	304
Stomatology	129	137
Pharmacy	50	47
Military Medicine	-	33

Table 3. The number of students enrolled in Master's laid down by the faculties (local students)

Academic year	2010-2011	2011-2012
General Medicine	-	292
Stomatology	124	130
Pharmacy	46	38
Military Medicine	-	39

Since 2011, besides already functioning Faculties of General Medicine, Stomatology, Pharmacy and Military Medicine, the Faculty of Public Health was established and launched. In fact, in 2004, YSMU Sanitary-Hygienic Faculty was dissolved. Afterwards, only 17 persons have been qualified in Sanitary-Hygienic field (Public Health) in YSMU Faculty of Postgraduate Education up to 2011 which constitutes about 2 persons per year, whereas the number of people graduating from the mentioned faculty up to 2004 was 50. On the other hand, in 2002-2010 as a result of a scientific research project, multiple issues in the sanitary-anti-epidemic sector surfaced. A solution to the problems detected was to involve the specialists of RA Hygiene and Anti-Epidemic State Inspectorate in the professional development courses. Thus, in 2002, the bodies conducting inspections underwent structural and compositional changes in accordance with the programme on reforms in the Social Sector of RA Government, and these reforms envisioned provision of relevant training for the specialists to fit the newly shaping working environment. However, the process was failed, hence, the best way of filling the gaps in the number of qualified healthcare specialists Sanitary-Hygienic field was the opening of the Faculty of Public Health at Master's level and this was launched in 2011. To note, the establishment of the Public Health Faculty resolves the issue of educating competent healthcare organisers and managers within the sector of public health. Moreover, the Faculty will further the training of specialists tailored to identify issues pertaining to public health; professionals engaged in studying, analysing and organising respective measures towards solution of these issues.

All the educational programs of Bachelor's and Master's degrees have been revised and approved since 2006 to align with the two-cycle requirements. To note the development of Bachelor's programmes was completed in 2011 (now they are again revised, because of the new ANQF requirements), whereas that of Master's programmes are still in develop (see the academic programs and syllabi). The main difference between Bachelor's and Master's study is a ratio between practical skills/knowledge. In contrast with Bachelor's degree where practical skills/knowledge percentage ratio is 30/70%, in Master's degree programs it is 70/30%. Theoretical knowledge is mainly underscored in the Bachelor's course, whereas the Master's course puts the importance on the application of the knowledge gained and the

development of manual skills and competencies. All the exams are characterized as paper-based tests in Bachelor's and Master's, except for the State Final Examination in Master's, which allows objectivity in checking students' knowledge and prevents corruption risks in this regard. To note, the first year students shall take computer-based exams in the summer session starting from 2012, which is directed to the reduction of the teachers' technical workload in the academic process as well as corruption risks.

In 2007-2012, for the purpose of implementing the academic process in Bachelor's and Master's the University has published 105 textbooks and methodological manuals in Armenian, Russian, and English (see YSMU Rector's report in the University Scientific Council, 03.03.2011, Protocol N 2).

In the reporting period the lifelong development of the academic staff and internationalization of higher, postgraduate education and research have been promoted by the following key factors:

- a. signed 27 regional and international interuniversity agreements and contracts promoting professionalization of the academic staff, students' exchange, and research projects;
- b. participation in professional trainings (128), international seminars, conferences and forums (736);
- c. about 56 lectures and seminars have been delivered by leading specialists from abroad, two of which by Nobel prize winner 2004 Aharon Chehanover;
- d. through the application of several electronic services (Hinari, UpToDate, Armenia LibGuide, Консультант Студента, *in Russian*) the University employees and students have the opportunity to access the literature database, comprising 17 000 units;
- e. University has organized 21 international conferences and symposia;
- f. two research journals (The New Armenian Medical Journal and Medicine, Science and Education) have been designed and published by the University since 2007;
- g. in 2007, the Council of Young Scientists was formed to encourage involvement of students, graduates and young health care specialists in research.

(a-g points, YSMU Rector's report in the University Scientific Council, 03. 03. 2011, Protocol N2)

Thus, in the reporting period, in terms of lifelong education the teaching training courses were conducted in the University, National Institute of Health, as well as abroad. However, the mentioned trainings were not clearly systematized and planned.

Nowadays, Faculty of Postgraduate and Continuing Education and Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre are developing steps which will be summarized and submitted for consideration to the academic council's session which will be held in May 2013.

As a good marker of the university benefit in a sphere of internationalization is the percentage of the international students. Based on the data of Educational Department of YSMU the total number of international students enrolled both in Bachelor's and Master's is 2128, which is about 33,4% of the total number of students studied in YSMU. Meanwhile, 155 international students (about 16,5% of total studied) are enrolled in postgraduate area of medical education, included internship, residency, researcher programmes. It is noticeable at first sight, two times difference of international Bachelor's and Master's students and postgraduates. Currently the proper university departments reveal the risks of such a difference.

The major reform in the field of postgraduate and continuing medical education is a structural integration of two main entities offering highly-qualified medical education in the RA in one. For these reason, in 2011, in accordance with the decision dating to 18.08.2011, N 1193-Ն of the RA Government, the postgraduate education component of "S. Avdabekyan National Institute of Health" CJSC was integrated into the YSMU infrastructure resulting in significant increase of the number of the renowned clinicians in the University faculty, as well as in greater number of leading clinics serving as education platforms for the University (see YSMU statement of postgraduate educational components integration of above mentioned two institutions addressed to RA Prime Minister and RA government decree N 1193-Ն). The specialists from National Institute of Health mainly teach in Master's and

Residency, where 70% of the curricula belong to practical skills. It should be also noted that the integrated clinics now serve as the University's units.

The detailed research on revealing the positive and negative aspects of the integration is still premature to discuss, however, quality assurance plans for the services are in the process of development.

Standard-1.2. The mission statement reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.

The development of a mission, strategy, goals and objectives is maintained through a close collaboration between administration and the internal and external stakeholders. Considering the practice of last five years all the university departments (educational, scientific, clinical) draw up next 5 year strategic plan and discuss it within the relevant councils, sessions of commissions. Afterwards, the top administration headed by the Rector is furnished with all the drafts, considering and hybriding them. After all these procedures are completed, the University Rector submits the new strategic plan to the University Scientific Council and Governing Board for panel discussion and approval. It is noteworthy, that both internal and external stakeholders are involved in the mentioned Council and Board (administrative staff, head of academic departments, professors, students, clinic staff, government representatives, deputies, etc.). It should be mentioned, that students representatives are involved in all the commissions, boards and councils of the University and guided by the regulations of RA Government and the University students mandatory participation in the University Scientific Council, Governing Board and Faculty Boards constitutes 25%. The main drawback of the system is being unbuffered with the stakeholders' needs reflected in structure of boards and respective regulations. Hence, the university is currently developing new mechanisms for mission and strategy development to ensure broader involvement of stakeholders and consideration of their needs.

Standard-1.3. The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and purpose and to further improve them.

The outcomes of implementing the mission and goals of the University are assessed by the following boards and commission of the University – these bodies operate in accordance with developed mechanisms and procedures:

1. The University management and scientific councils operate in accordance with the regulations, approved by the Rector. According to regulation approved the University rector and vice-rectors present a report on annual activities, get Scientific Council's approval and respective departments are specifically instructed on their activities. An action plan is designed on the basis of these instructions each year (refer Board regulations, Rector's and Vice-rector's annual reports, and Scientific Council's decrees).
2. The University subdivisions (academic departments, central and cyclic-methodical committees, faculty boards, dean's offices, science coordination council/science coordination board, expert commissions, ethics committee, student parliament, student dean's offices) evaluate the mission and goals through regular discussions and they are approved by respective committees/boards (see the regulations, procedures, plans, reports, protocols of the activities of every commission). However, there is no systematic approach to the evaluation of the mission and goals, therefore, respective developments are in the process.
3. The assessment of students' achievements is implemented by the State Final, 3-step examining system, according to the State and the University Rules and Regulations (see Annex of Decree of Minister of Education and Science of RA N1197-Ն 31.10.2011; YSMU Rectors Decree on Rules and Regulations on Final exams and Establishment of State Examination Boards N42M 30.03.2012). During the first step students' practical skills and competencies are checked. During the second one students' knowledge is checked by computer-based test exam. The third step - oral exam – check students' clinical thinking,

competencies to take necessary emergency measures and apply gained knowledge by means of situational tasks. Evaluation of knowledge at the Faculty of Public Health is conducted solely through test examinations and submission/presentation of a Master's paper.

Knowledge assessment is carried out by State Examination Commission. Leading external and internal specialists in appropriate field are included in Member List. Chairpersons of the Commissions are appointed from renowned yet not the University specialists (see the order on organizing the State Final Exam, attached; also see the details in criterion 1.3). Upon the completion of the exam the commission makes analytic report in Scientific Board of corresponding faculty (see the statements of the chairmen of Final State Examination Commissions).

Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre functioning in University since 2011 periodically conducts surveys on assessment and provides analysis of University's different infrastructures activities (see the strategic plan of Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre and the web-page in the University web-site; also see the details in criterion 1.3).

Examples of Good Practice

1. The University carried out its activity pursuant the law of RA on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, introduced and implemented two-cycle medical education.
2. Commitment of the top administration and leading specialists of the university to improve the conditions and logistics in the University clinics to ensure high quality of healthcare services delivered.
3. A vast majority of reforms in terms of upgrading the clinical and hospital facilities, improvement of logistics thereof, the training of the faculty conducted on a regular basis, as well as the entire updating of the literature and education materials have resulted in the significant increase observed in the number of international students.

4. Lectures and seminars of numerous renowned international specialists and the Nobel laureate have greatly fostered the improvement of the faculty of continuing education. The exchange of clinical experience and organizing of multiple international conferences has also contributed to the professional development of the faculty.
5. The publication of a great number of methodological literatures in three languages contributed to educational system improvement.
6. Currently running academic programmes (both in BA and Master's) in foreign languages (English and Russian) in three main faculties – General Medicine, Stomatology and Pharmacy.

Examples of Not-so-Good Practice

1. No active participation have been observed from the University within the discussions related to the two-cycle education model in the RA Law on Education, while choosing relevant timeline for the introduction thereof and its suitability in the sphere of medical education.
2. The involvement of external stakeholders is not sufficient in the development of the University mission, in the composition and assessment of the University strategic plan.
3. Pro-active involvement of internal stakeholders in the university life.
4. On site and close partnership between YSMU, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health while developing academic descriptors in relation to Bachelor's, Master's and Residency programmes.
5. The monopoly in a sphere of postgraduate and continuing medical education.

CRITERION 2

Governance and administration

The Institution's system of governance ensures ethical decision-making and efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to effectively accomplish its mission, educational and other purposes.

Ambition: *The University sets:*

- *To optimize of the University governance structure in order to accomplish strategic plan and current programs for effective management.*
- *To ensure harmonious operation of the University Council and other governance bodies and the allocation of powers, the comprehensive formation of the system aimed at decision-making and accomplishment.*
- *To improve the legal base at all levels of the University governance and its further development according.*
- *To expand the students' participation in the university governance and decision-making procedures.*
- *To set informative-analytic structure of methodological support aimed at evaluation of efficiency of the university activity for implementation of the strategic plan (see the Strategic Plan of Yerevan State Medical University, Objective 6, p. 12-13, attached).*

Standard 2.1: The institution's governance and administrative structures and practices promote effective and ethical leadership and decision making congruent with the mission and purpose of the institution (N.B. In Armenian version of this Standard there is an additional sub point — "University has necessary staff, material and financial resources to accomplish teaching and other objectives").

The regulated procedure of decision-making in the University is ensured through the governance system of Yerevan State Medical University.

The founder of the University is the Republic of Armenia. RA Government is a party that makes decisions on behalf of the Republic of Armenia. The Ministry of Science and Education of the RA exercises oversight over the activities of the university (it is one of the governance bodies authorized by the Government of the Republic of Armenia).

“The university governance is conducted in accordance with the Legislation of the Republic of Armenia and the University Statute, on the basis of self-governance along with the combination of principles of sole governing and collegiality through Council, Academic Council and Rector Council’s functions (see YSMU Statute adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, on September 15, 2005, Decree N 1716, attached).

The University collegial body of governance is the university’s Council (henceforth the Council). The Council is composed of 32 members. It includes the 8 faculty members, 8 students (internal stakeholders), 16 external stakeholders — 8 representatives of the founder (Government of the Republic of Armenia) and the 8 persons nominated by the authorized body (Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Armenia).

The Council elects the Chairman (from Council staff, except students’ representatives). The Chairman of the Council may not be from the university staff (Dean, Head of Department, instructor/teacher).

The Council sets and confirms the charter on the Rector election and organizes the Rector election.

By introduction of the Rector Council:

- sets the main trends of the University development, as well as the directions of international cooperation,

- develops and approves the ordinance of the elections and work of the body (henceforth Supervisory Body) which conducts supervisory functions over the Executive Body, organizes its members elections,

-through Supervisory Body presentation reviews the Rector's annual report on the University operation per annum and confirms it,

-reviews and approves the University's budget etc.

The **Academic Council of the University** chaired by the rector is the regulatory and coordinating governing body of the ongoing educational, academic, scientific and technical executions. The standard term of the Academic Council activities is 5 years. The overall number of the members of the University Council does not exceed 80. The university council is comprised of at least 25% of students, and the representatives of the teaching staff make up the majority. The number of the members named from administration may not surpass 50% of the total number of the Academic Council members. The other members of the academic council are nominated from corresponding structural units of the university according to the Regulation of Academic Council (see YSMU Academic Council Regulation, adopted on 25.05.2011 N3 meeting decree, approved by the rector of Yerevan State Medical University on 07.06.2011; order N50-M attached).

The Academic Council convenes sessions at least once every month. The university's academic council:

- a) endorses its charter (regulation) (Adopted by YSMU Academic Council 03 session 25.05.2011 and Confirmed by YSMU Rector's Decree),
- b) reviews the main and perspective trends of scientific spheres, organizes hearings on the outcomes of the important research and scientific-methodological work carried out in the university,
- c) implements the elections of faculty Deans, Heads of Departments and Professors,
- d) makes decisions on awarding the Ranks of Associate Professor and Professor according to the established order,
- e) submits proposals to the Ministry of Education and Science on performing educational programs designed at new/modern professions. As an example of efficient development – YSMU new Public Health Master Program was founded in 2011. According to the managerial needs related to the new Academic Program the new structural unit of YSMU — Faculty of Public Health was organized in 2011.

Day-by-day management of the university in accordance with the Statute of Yerevan State Medical University is under the responsibility of the Rector who is elected for a term of 5 years, no more than 2 consecutive terms. The rector's elections are conducted in the open competition by YSMU Council by secret ballot with a simple majority votes of the Council's members. The Rector forms an Advisory body (Rectorate) which undertakes activities concerning all spheres of the university in compliance with the statute between the period of the Council and Academic Council's sessions.

The Rector of the university:

a) manages the university's educational, research, industrial, economic, financial, international and other activities and without attorney executes on behalf of the university and represents its interests,

b) organizes the operation of the University's structural units and ensures their efficient running,

c) brings forward annual report to the council's approval,

d) ensures the implementation of the YSMU council and academic council's decisions,

e) signs labor contracts with the deans, heads of the departments and teachers in accordance with the given statute who are selected in compliance with the set regulation,

f) makes orders on students' admission, their academic probation, withdrawal and reinstatement,

g) appoints and dismisses the vice-rectors, the heads of the university's central administration and to determine the competence of their execution.

The structure of the university is attached.

The **Faculty** is one of the major academic-scientific subdivisions of the university. The faculty is an academic autonomous structural subdivision of the university which is formed in pursuance of the general professional bias/trend or type of the execution. Academic Departments (Chairs) and other academic-scientific subdivisions are structural units of Faculty (YSMU faculty Regulation adopted in the university academic council's N15 meeting Decree, approved by the rector of the university on 24.04.2009 24M-2 order).

The Faculty Council and the dean are the management bodies of the faculty. The faculty is formed during the faculty session and is confirmed in the Academic Council of the university for a 5 year period. At least 25 percent members of the Faculty Council are students.

Numerous legal documents are created and updated in order to ensure the legal bases of the university's management, compliance with the university's strategic plan (see YSMU strategic plan, Objective 6, p. 12-13 attached, "The regulation of final attestation exams of Bachelor and Master programs" YSMU rectors decree, 42M-2, 30.03.2012 attached; YSMU rectors decree on "The regulation of failed exams, repeated modules, re-examination procedures" 30.03.2012 108US, "Procedure of election of teaching staff" adopted by Academic Council 28.12.2011 session 4 attached, "Regulation of Master programs" adopted by N16 session of Rectorate 18.06.2012 and confirmed by rectors decree N 68-M 18.06.2012).

University governance is performed with the help of vertical managerial chain procedures. Depending on the type of problem procedures of PDCA cycle could be different: 1. Typical and every day procedures are performed according to appropriate regulations, 2. In situations that are not reflected in regulations managerial procedures are realized according to PDCA cycle in meetings of appropriate managerial staff, faculties and students' representatives. Initiation of process is realized by University Management according to environmental scanning, whereas sometimes problem issues are raised by the faculties and students ("from down to up") as well as by external stakeholders ("from outside").

Based on the tradition of the university collegial atmosphere and cooperation culture have been developed in the management of the university. The decisions are made pursuant to the regulated process, but there is no separate set of ethics rules.

Yerevan State Medical University has the required human resources to implement educational, academic, health and other improvements.

According to the data on 2010-2011 academic year, the total number of permanent faculty is 557 including 64 Doctors of Science (DrSci), 237 Candidates to Doctor of Science (PhD), 44 Professor, 108 Associate professors, non-permanent staff is 105, the

administrative staff is 205 (Form 3-gm annual statistical reports forwarded to National Statistical Service of the RA 2010-2011).

According to 2011-2012 academic year data the permanent teaching staff of the university is 1114 including 173 Doctors of Sciences (DrSci), 517 Candidates to Doctor of Sciences (PhD), 107 Professors, 201 Associate Professors. Non-permanent staff is 340, the administrative staff is 298. (Form 3-gm annual statistical reports forwarded to National Statistical Service of the RA 2011-2012).

Teacher/student ratio is approximately 1/5 and the experience shows that it is sufficient to implement educational programs. However, there are no accurate calculations on the ratio required for the effective performance of educational programs.

Such unprecedented staff growth during a year is due to 18/08/2011 Government's Decree on integration the Academic Division of National Institute of Health of the Ministry of Health of Republic of Armenia into YSMU.

According to the strategic plan of YSMU (see YSMU strategic plan, Objective 3, p 9-10 attached), measures are being carried out to promote qualified staff. The teachers' professional training department has been re-established (See the regulation of YSMU Academic-Methodological Division).

YSMU has certain material and financial resources to implement educational and health programs (required references on recent years are attached: "Information letter on main assets, 01.01.2012" YSMU 2012 budget, financial reports 2010-2012 attached).

As it is seen from the data in the table, the budget performance in 2010 was 98%, and in 2011 it makes 99,4%. However, there are no precise calculation mechanisms of required material and financial resources to implement educational, health and other programs to existing extent. The calculation and allocation of the required resources is performed spontaneously pursuant to existing demand. In order to promote educational and health programs the university has a considerable need of resource acquisition.

Administrative structure of university is a subject for changes

Standard 2.2. The institution's system of governance provides for student and teachers input in decision making in matters directly affecting them.

The participation of teachers and students in decision-making related to them firstly is ensured by their representation in all governing bodies of the university. University Council (25% teachers and 25% students), University Academic Council (25% students, more than 50% teachers/, Faculty Councils (25% students, 75% teachers). There are also students representatives in Central and Module Methodological Committees. The Student Parliament Chairman is a member of the Rector's Board (Rectorate).

The Student Parliament is the university students' self-governing body (independent association of YSMU students, see Criterion 4 as well) representing students' interests, which enables them to participate in university governing bodies and discuss issues related to students (See YSMU Statute attached, YSMU Students' Parliament Statute and web site <http://www.amsp.am>).

The University Academic Council meetings are open and each student and teacher is able to participate and express their opinion on issues to be considered.

The university management holds meetings with students and teaching staff regularly, pays attention to their opinions and proposals, which are taken into account during decision making.

Teachers and students can publish their opinions in the university periodical called "Future Doctor". Students also have their own magazine entitled "Medicus".

Standard 2.3: The institution carries out short, medium and long term planning consistent with its mission and purpose as well as appropriate monitoring tools ensuring implementation of the plans.

Short-term planning is carried out by Rector's Board for one-week period, by the University Academic Council for one-month period and during department (Chair) sessions for two-week period.

Mid-term planning (for one-year period) is carried out by the university Council as well as by the university Academic and Faculties' Councils.

Long-term planning is carried out based on 5-year plan, which is introduced to the university council by the newly elected (re-elected) Rector.

The implementation of short-term, mid-term and long-term planning is carried out by the university subdivisions/units and administration and is headed by Rector.

The Council considers and approves the annual report of the supervisory body, discusses and approves Rector's annual report on university annual activities, which is introduced by supervisory body, reviews and approves the university structure and amendments thereto as well as considers and approves the budget of the university.

The monitoring of short-term and mid-term planning adopted by the university Academic Council is carried out by the representative of administration (as a rule either Rector or Vice-Rector) pursuant to Academic Council's decision (Example: any minute of Academic Council's decision, Regulation of Scientific Council Adopted by Scientific Council 25.05.2011 attached session N03 and approved by YSMU rectors order N 50 M decree 07.06.2011; III27 g).

The planning implementation monitoring is also carried out by the heads of subdivisions and by commissions.

The monitoring can be carried out in different ways (applying different tools):

1. Lectures and practical trainings supervision, class assessment,
2. Teachers' professional qualities (skills) validation (attestation),
3. Annual reports of Heads of Departments and other subdivisions and their analysis,
4. Analysis of external and internal stakeholder's surveys,
5. Meetings with focus groups.

The results of monitoring are used for further improvement of planning.

Standard 2.4: The institution conducts environmental scanning and draws on the findings to enhance its effectiveness.

YSMU administration, heads of subdivisions, Quality Assessment and Assurance center carry out research on a regular basis on factors affecting the activities of the University. According to the University's mission and strategic plan, the University continues to evaluate the effectiveness of its activities as well as provide methodological support for the implementation of strategic plan for final formation processes of informative-analytical structure, the most important phases of which is the creation of Quality Assessment and Assurance center (see Criterion 10).

YSMU management carries out the research on factors affecting university's activities based on the following data:

1. Annual reports of Rector and heads of subdivisions of YSMU,
2. Annual reports on student's academic progress/performance,
3. Results of inspections of subdivision,
4. Surveys among external and internal stakeholders,
5. Daily interviews of university management (Rector, Vice-Rector) with teachers and students through the university website,
6. Regular meetings of university management (Rector, Vice-Rector) with teaching staff, students and external stakeholders (as a rule once a week).

The new reforms are planned based on the analyses of mentioned surveys. As an example: based on the results of performed scanning on new Master Programs the need of improvement of practical clinical compound was elucidated. For these reason, in 2011, in accordance with the decision dating to 18.08.2011, N 1193-Ն of the RA Government, the postgraduate education component of "S. Avdabekyan National Institute of Health" CJSC of MoH was integrated into the YSMU infrastructure resulting in significant increase of the number of the renowned clinicians in the University faculty, as well as in greater number of leading clinics serving as education platforms for the University (see YSMU statement of postgraduate educational components integration of above mentioned two institutions addressed to RA Prime Minister and RA government decree N 1193-Ն).

Standard 2.5: The management on the processes draws on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act).

The administration is carried out based on quality management principle (planning, implementation, assessment, improvement) at all levels (Chairs, Faculties, Administration, Rectorate and Academic Council) of the University Governance. The proposed reforms and related processes are first planned, then plans are introduced to the University Council, Academic Council, Faculties' Councils and Department sessions. Afterwards, the university structural subdivisions in the framework of their competence carry out the implementation of the planned activities. Then, the effectiveness of the implementation is evaluated (assessed). This assessment can be done by special commissions established by the university as well as the university subdivisions, namely **the University Quality Assessment and Assurance Center**. The assessment and analysis of the results enables the university to develop an action plan directed at the improvement processes and serves as a basis for the new planning (Example: Work plans and annual reports of the departments).

Standard 2.6: There are mechanisms in place ensuring data collection on the effectiveness of the academic programs and other processes, analyses and application of the data in decision-making.

There is an information collection on the effectiveness of professional Academic Programs and other processes at the institution. The analysis is carried out by the University Quality Assessment and Assurance Center, through appropriate mechanisms (See Criterion 10). Before the establishment of QAAC appropriate functions were given to Methodological Department, Reform Department.

The mentioned information is substantiated by the research of the following data:

1. Reports of Rector and heads of subdivisions,
2. Students' academic performance summary,
3. Results of subdivision inspections,

4. Study of the Government decisions of the Republic of Armenia that are directly or indirectly related to the University,
5. Analysis of the survey results conducted among external and internal stakeholders,
6. Analysis of the issues raised during the meetings of the university management with students, teachers and external stakeholders,
7. Analysis of publications related to the university activities published in printed and electronic media by the Rector's Public Relations department.

Standard 2.7: There are mechanisms in place providing up to date, objective and impartial quality (quantitative and qualitative) information on the academic programs offered qualification awards.

The assessments of information on the University Academic Programs and the quality of awarded qualifications are frequently made by Rector's Public Relations department through the analysis of publications in printed and electronic media related to the activities of the university. However, the assessments are not regulated and there are no clear, objective mechanisms.

Examples of good practice

- 1 The structure of the university is logical and ensures the necessary conditions for the implementation of goals arising from the mission of the university,
- 2 The university ensures the harmonious activity of the governing bodies and has authority separation system,
- 3 Numerous legal documents are developed and updated for the purposes of creation of legal database of governance at the university,
- 4 The university has high performance of financial planning,
- 5 Students' participation in the university governance and decision-making processes is ensured,

- 6 The periodic meetings of the university management with teaching staff, students and external stakeholders as well as acquaintance with the issues of concern through the university website contributes to the improvement of assessment mechanisms of the university activities effectiveness.

Examples of not-so-good practice

- 1 For the implementation of academic, healthcare, scientific and other programs the university has certain problems connected with material and financial resources. The university management makes efforts for the improvement of the mentioned resources.
- 2 The reforms conducted at the university are not always sufficiently coordinated.
- 3 The assessments of information publication on the university educational programs and the quality of awarded qualifications are not regulated and there are no clear, objective mechanisms.

CRITERION 3

Academic programs

The programs are in concord with the institution’s mission, form part of institutional planning and resource allocation, are intellectually credible and promote mobility and internationalization.

Ambitions: The University tends to realize improvement and provision of Academic Programs corresponding to the RA higher educational standards of the Bachelor and Master degrees in Medicine, Stomatology, Pharmacy and Master Degree in Public Health based on the awarded qualifications and expected learning outcomes which will promote students mobility and university internationalization.

Standard 3.1. The academic programs are thoroughly formulated, according to the intended learning outcomes, which correspond to an academic qualification and are in line with the state academic standards.

Programs reflect mission of University (see YSMU Strategic Plan 2006, University Mission page 3.- “to train highly qualified specialists for health care system and for armed forces of RA” attached), form part of institutional planning and resource allocation (see Statute of Yerevan State medical University, page 3, “Chapter 2 II- Rights and Obligations” approved by Resolution of Government of RA verified by President of RA (15.09.2005) attached).

The academic programs and their courses and modules are comprehensively formulated in accordance to the intended learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are formulated according to State Academic Standards of Higher Education of Republic of

Armenia on bachelor and master degrees in Medicine, Stomatology and Pharmacy which are in line with professional needs and in concord with WHO recommendations and WFME (WORLD FEDERATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION) requirements (State Academic Standards of Higher Education of Republic of Armenia on Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Medicine, Stomatology and Pharmacy, Approved by the Minister of Education and Science by 4.03.2010, WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement The 2012 Revision, "Hygiene", subject programs on "Pathology and Pathophysiology", Obstetrics and Gynecology, "Therapy" approved by YSMU Rector).

Programs' curricula, syllabi and subject programs (Programs' curricula, syllabi and subject programs approved by rector of YSMU, 2006-2011) show a balance between specialized contents, general knowledge and professional skills. Subject Programs are thoroughly formulated by Academic Departments (Teaching staff of Chairs), discussed and approved by Module Methodological Committees of YSMU, recommended by Central Methodological Committee of YSMU and approved by YSMU Rector. Each of subject programs along with theoretical knowledge description contains list of intended professional skills (for example Syllabus and curriculum for Pharmacy Master program on "Drug analysis", recommended by YSMU Pharmaceutical Module methodological committee and approved by YSMU Rector by 28.12.2011; subject programs on "Pathology and Pathophysiology", Obstetrics and Gynecology, "Therapy" approved by YSMU Rector).

According to Regulations of Student mobility (Order of minister of Education and Science) students' mobility is conducted on the base of on similarities of academic programs' Curricula and Syllabi. Thus international mobility of students requires comparison of Curricula and Syllabi (since September 2012 to October 2012 around 15 students were transferred to YSMU programs from other universities (YSMU Rectors' Decrees)).

Standard 3.2. The institution has a policy that promotes alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes and ensures effective learning.

The University doesn't possess any precisely formulated policy for choosing teaching and learning methods promoting student-centered teaching, however, proposals for implementing teaching and learning new methods have been discussed and adopted by the University chairs and module- methodological boards/commissions. Today methods of interactive, on-line, problem-based learning and teaching in small groups are more often implemented at the University. A greater attention is paid to students' self and practical work. Students are evaluated both for their individual and team work.

There is a methodological guideline for the methodology of Subjects Programs Development (worked-out by Central Methodological committee (Protocol N2, 06.10.2011) and approved by YSMU Rector), it contains brief description of main structure of Syllabi and Subject program (YSMU Central Methodological Protocol N02 by 06.10.2011 with annex).

The effective and student-centered learning is supported by the fact that students are involved in Module Methodological Committees and Central Methodological Committee of YSMU (Lists of members of Module Methodological Committees, Decree of YSMU Rector N 23M, 02.03.2012 and Central Methodological Committee of YSMU, Decree of YSMU Rector N 87 M, 15.09.2011), actively participate in appropriate sessions, and by the fact that students can write a message with questions to Rector and 1st Vice-Rector at the University web site (<http://www.ysmu.am/am/forum>; <http://www.ysmu.am/am/information-arm/ask-the-rector>) and get answers which are visible for all the site visitors, as well as by Periodically performed surveys among students and alumni.

Standard 3.3. The program ensures impartial evaluation of students' level of achievement against the learning and educational objectives and promotes academic integrity.

YSMU programs ensure impartial, transparent evaluation of student level of achievement, based on module and final graduation exam rules and regulations.

Impartial evaluation is assured by the facts that:

- Module Exams are carried-out in written way in MCQ testing form (e.g. YSMU Rector Decree, 22.11.2011).
- There is an Exam Monitoring video system for procedure for distant observation of examination process, as well as a procedure of appellation of exam results with students' participation, that promotes academic integrity.
- As a Pilot project there is a computer based exam system for 1st year students of YSMU (YSMU Rectors' Decree N53 M 26.04.2011).
- Final attestation of students is conducted by State Examination Boards, according to State and University Rules and Regulations (Annex of Decree of Minister of Education and Science of RA N1197N 31.10.2011; YSMU Rectors Decree on Rules and Regulations on Final exams and Establishment of State Examination Boards N42M 30.03.2012). As a rule, leading external and internal specialists in appropriate field are included in Member List and external specialists are appointed as Chairmen of Boards. Final attestation is carried out by 3 step State exam: step 1 — assessment of practical skills, step 2 — multiple choice questions testing (computer based), step 3 — oral exam.
- Though during last 6 years there were only written MCQ testing exams on modules, during every practical class students participate in discussion of topics actively and acquire professional practical skills, especially during Practice Modules (Skills are assessed by appropriate Practice Module Leader).

By the resolution of YSMU Academic Council in 2012-2013 academic year 1st year Master Program Exams instead of MCQ testing Oral exams will be implemented (in order to ensure communication and presentation skills of students) (see resolution of YSMU Academic Council protocol 4 31.10.2012).

Program is culminating with the Master thesis defense.

Programs' efficiency and students' evaluation transparency issues are analyzed by Deans of Faculties and Vice-Rector on Academic Affairs (<http://www.ysmu.am/am/home-arm/514-meeting>) reported and discussed at Faculty Councils and Scientific Council, along with by internal and external stakeholders' surveys and discussions. Results are analyzed by QA Department of YSMU and displayed at the website of YSMU (YSMU QA Department DATA, 2011-2012, <http://www.ysmu.am/am/education-arm/quality-control>). Results of evaluations are used for further improvement of student evaluation policy and procedures aimed at assurance of academic integrity.

Standard 3.4. The programs are intellectually credible, designed coherently, and articulate well with other relevant programs, promote mobility of students and staff as well as internationalization.

- Academic programs are consonant with the appropriate programs of leading Russian and EU Medical Universities. Within the frame of Academic program all the modules have appropriately allocated ECTS credits, that ensure the national and international mobility of students within the frame of exchange programs (modules, practice) (YSMU Scientific Council Resolution Protocol 9, 28.06.2006; YSMU Strategic Plan, 2007, page 15, Aim 9-“to support mobility of students and staff as well as internationalization”). For example in 2011-2012 academic year YSMU hosted students from Russian, Ukrainian, Lebanon, Iranian, and Armenian Medical Universities. The procedure of transfer of students is done according to Armenian state legislation (Order of Minister of Science and Education of RA) that requires comparison of Curricula and Syllabi and up to 20% difference is as assessed as acceptable.
- University academic programs assume the change of program at the end of 1st academic year of bachelor programs, due to the harmonization of all the bachelor programs 1st year modules (Rules of transfer of student from one program to another, Programs Curricula and Syllabi approved by YSMU Rector 4.03.2010).

- All of the Curricula and Syllabi are translated into English and Russian. Academic Programs of YSMU are **taught** in three languages: Armenian (since 1920), Russian (for local students, since 1939, for foreigners since 1985) and English (since 2000) (<http://www.ysmu.am/am/faculties/403>).
- Foreign languages' modules are included in all of the university curricula and syllabi (Programs' curricula, syllabi and subject programs approved by rector of YSMU, 2006-2011).
- Up to date professional and scientific literature in foreign languages on appropriate field is available at University Library (<http://www.ysmu.am/en/education/library>) along with access to number of national and international online resources (<http://www.ysmu.am/en/information/online-resources>).
- There are student exchange programs with Regional, European, US, Asian, African Medical Universities, clinics and medical, pharmaceutical and dentistry student associations (<http://www.ysmu.am/en/international-relations>, appropriate agreements).
- University has Policy for the employment of new academic staff with foreign language knowledge (University Professors Elections Procedures, Adopted by the Decision of YSMU Scientific Council, Session 4, 28.12.2011), candidates must pass the qualification English and Russian language exams at YSMU Chair of Foreign languages or could submit appropriate certificates from trusted institution.
- University has procedures for teachers' continuous English language skills improvement.
- YSMU teaching staff periodically participates in congresses, conferences, seminars, trainings, fellowships, summer schools in leading foreign universities and clinics (Annual Report of Vice-Rector of YSMU on International Affairs, 2011).
- University has invited Visiting professorship programs (<http://www.ysmu.am/am/international-arm/visiting-professors-arm>).

- University participates in international programs that support internationalization of academic programs (DIUSAS, PICQA, TEMPUS Programs, Erasmus Mundus Action 2
<http://www.anqa.am/en/NewsItems/0c0b9b4eb25c4d3fb163badcc970247d.aspx>).
- University has been conducting teaching of foreign citizens since 1957 (Armenians from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Cyprus, Bulgaria). Since 1985 the teaching process has been carried out in Russian for Indian, Arabian, Iranian and other students. Since 2000 classes at YSMU have been available also in English. As of today, YSMU has produced 657 English and more than 2000 Armenian and Russian speaking international graduates. Currently, YSMU has 741 foreign students from India, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Canada, USA, RF, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Abkhazia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius (<http://www.ysmu.am/en/faculties/403>).
- Graduates of YSMU periodically pass license exams in foreign countries (Reporting period is January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009, <http://www.ysmu.am/en/archive-news/329-usmle-performance-data-of-ysmu-students>).

Standard 3.5. There are mechanisms in place ensuring academic program approval, monitoring, and periodic review.

YSMU has Policy aimed at the improvement Academic Programs Effectiveness Evaluation which is reflected at YSMU Strategic program (see YSMU Strategic Plan, 2006 attached). University administration promotes the improvement of Academic programs (Deans' of Faculties and Vice-Rector on Academic Affairs (<http://www.ysmu.am/am/home-arm/514-meeting>)). The procedure of annual monitoring of Academic Programs is developed by YSMU QA Center in 2011 (see Criterion 10). There are appropriate infrastructures and procedures for academic program creation, evaluation and improvement (see criterion 10 as well). There are mechanisms' and tools' chain ('Department Session-Module Methodological Committee of Faculty-Central Methodological committee-University Scientific Council) that monitor and revise academic programs (e.g. Transcripts from 'Department Session 09.01.2012 -

Module Methodological Committee of Pharmaceutical Faculty session 5 16.01.2012 - Central Methodological committee-University Scientific Council, Decrees of Rector), based on surveys among students and other stakeholders and changes in appropriate professional fields. Following tools are used for the revealing of these needs: survey among external and internal stakeholders (<http://www.ysmu.am/am/education-arm/quality-control>), professional and scientific conferences and meetings (e.g. The 3rd International Medical Congress of Armenia was launched in Yerevan State Medical University on the 7th of July, 2011.; III International Congress of the Armenian Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (AAPRAS) entitled “Complications and unfavorable results in plastic surgery”, June 28-30, 2011; 90th Anniversary Congress dedicated to the foundation of YSMU), assessment of learning outcomes against its educational objectives.

University Teaching Staff periodically publish articles on opinions and concerns related to Academic Programs in scientific-informational journal of Yerevan State Medical University “Medicine, Science and Education”(e.g. N 1 p 3-8; N2 p 3-5; N3 p 57-70; p 70-76, N10 117-120).

YSMU Student Parliament has an Education-Methodological committee for Academic Affairs (see Regulation of YSMU Student Parliament http://www.amsp.am/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66&Itemid=77&lang=en attached), Members actively participate in the process of evaluation of Academic programs (plenipotentiary participation in sessions of Methodological Committees, Faculties and University council (25%)). Student Parliament has an independent monthly journal named “Medicus” where they publish articles on Academic Program Evaluation (“Medicus” N3-4 p 185-19, p 20-21) as well as independent web site <http://www.amsp.am> along with page at the university web site (<http://www.ysmu.am/en/student-parliament>).

Based on Learning outcomes’ assessment results, displayed mainly in semiannual analytical reports of Faculties’ Deans, Vice Rector annual report on student’s academic progress and Chairmen of State Examination Board, Faculties Scientific Councils adopt resolutions for initiation of reforms in Academic Programs (Curriculum Development). As a

result of periodic review of programs new modules has been established (e.g. Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacokinetics for Pharmacy Students Rectors Decree N 22 M, 01.03.2012 on changes in Curriculum of Pharmacy Master Program).

Examples of good practice

1. There are appropriate infrastructures for academic program creation, evaluation and improvement.
2. University administration promotes the development and improvement of Academic programs.
3. Teaching staff has a readiness and desire to implement all the necessary efforts to acquire new knowledge and experience.
4. Students are involved in the processes of academic program continuous evaluation and improvement. Student Parliament has an independent monthly journal named “Medicus” and independent web site where they publish articles on Academic Problem Evaluation.
5. Program assessment and improvements are also based on the results of license examination of university graduates abroad.
6. University has good practice in terms of foreign medical and pharmaceutical students teaching performed in Armenian, English and Russian.

Examples of not-so-good practice

1. The University doesn't possess any precisely formulated policy for choosing teaching and learning methods promoting student-centered teaching, however, proposals for implementing teaching and learning new methods have been discussed and adopted by the University chairs and module- methodological boards/commissions. Today

methods of interactive, on-line, problem-based learning and teaching in small groups are more often implemented at the University. A greater attention is paid to students' self and practical work. Students are evaluated both for their individual and team work.

2. During last 6 years there were only written MCQ testing approach for students assessments while final state exam has oral (3rd) step. As improvement: By the resolution of YSMU Academic Council protocol 4 31.10.2012 in 2012-2013 academic year 1st year Master Program Exams instead of MCQ testing Oral exams will be implemented (in order to ensure communication and presentation skills of students) (Decision of Scientific Council of YSMU).
3. There are number of gaps and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of procedures for monitoring and reforms of Academic Program based on learning outcomes, internal and external stakeholders' surveys (e.g. The relation with external stakeholders is weak and spontaneous). As improvement: broadening of relations between university and external stakeholders (conferences, seminars, meetings, surveys, agreements).
4. As a factor endangering Effective Learning the lack of laboratories and equipment for practical classes could be mentioned. As improvement: broadening, renovation and equipping of auditoriums, laboratories and clinical bases.

CRITERION 4

Students

The institution has student advising and support services which provide for productive and learning environment

Ambitions: The University has adopted a policy, which is aimed at ensuring the necessary environment to address the requirements in respect of education qualifications descriptors, and is specifically designed to improve the qualification system accounting for student knowledge assessment.

Standard 4.1. The institution has set mechanisms for promoting equitable recruitment, selection and admission procedures.

The selection and admission of students into higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as “the HEI”) of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as “the RA”), *inter alia* into Yerevan State Medical University (hereinafter referred to as “the YSMU”) is conducted pursuant to the Government Order On Admission to State and Non-state Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Armenia (in compliance with educational programme of Bachelor’s Course)(see the Order). The applicant, in accordance with the stated Order, may choose to take 2 from amongst 3 specialized examinations on physics, chemistry, biology; the examination is conducted in a unified form. The overall outputs of these examinations are taken account of when the applicant participates in the admission competition organized by the State Admission Committee; the Government of the Republic of Armenia allocates free of charge and fee-paid seats in this competition, respectively.

Each year, the total average number of students matriculated in university studies free of charge (state-funded education) constitutes 95 persons, and the number of those studying on a paid basis – 490 persons. However, since a policy of facilitating the admission conducted annually has been at play within the last five years; the University forwards a prior

application to the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science for obtaining authorization to make arrangements for admission of an average of 150 additional students. As a result, the total average number of students entering the university annually has constituted 750 persons within the last five years.

As to the additional 150 students (male students) stated above, they are matriculated in university studies without annual leave credit for military service. The policy underlying additionally organized admission goes as follows: grant the applicant - who ensures a minimum score above the exam threshold - an opportunity to study in the university.

It should also be mentioned, that even though the admission is facilitated resulting in a greater number of first-year students, the number of university graduates has not increased, since the number of students - not maintaining good academic standing, failing in respective examinations and, thus, disqualifying for further studies - has increased almost by 1.5 (see reports by the University Office for Academic Affairs).

There are no any researches to clarify whether implementation of above mentioned policy was effective or not. We can just add that with this policy we have restriction of possibility to assess the motivation of applicant. The fact that all faculties' educational programs are unified allows students to change the faculty after 1st grade of education.

Admission of international students is held in accordance with the Law "On the Order of Admission of Foreign Citizens to Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Armenia". This Order stipulates the terms of organisation of admission, preparatory courses, academic process, as well as the procedure for submitting required documents and maintaining personal files (see the Order).

In opposition to the selection of local students, the role of University in the selection of international students is much more significant (thus, for instance, the selection of Indian students is conducted by the respective institutional commission).

An average of 420 students (from 22 countries) are annually matriculated in the university studies; meanwhile, the University has sufficient capacity in terms of financial and tangible as well as human resources for ensuring their education.

Standard 4.2. The institution has policies and procedures for assessing student educational needs.

The provisions below are enshrined in the Strategic Plan designed specifically for the reporting period:

(a) identify student satisfaction with the training; develop satisfaction measurement standards, which will apply to various academic components; also conduct annual surveys ensuring active participation on behalf of Student Parliament;

(b) assess the adequacy of currently available lecture rooms; progressively ensure its enrichment, modernisation and further expansion in conformity with the developments of educational programmes and audience scale;

(c) examine lab facility resources currently available in accordance with quality assurance standards (see pages 8, 10, 11, University 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, enclosed)

In the reporting period certain operations have been regularly carried out at the University in order to scrutinize student educational needs thoroughly enough. These activities have furthered the improvement of academic process, as well as have fostered quality enhancement of various ongoing procedures.

In order to examine the student educational needs, certain actions have regularly been taken at the University, which have promoted to the improvement of academic process and enhancement of quality in the procedures employed.

Thus, every term, the issues students face in the academic process are discussed in the scope of meetings convened for students, dean's offices and departmental representatives. In addition, solutions thereon are also considered.

The University official web-site provides a forum ensuring the communication between students and the university rector; the issues raised and suggestions made via this forum are considered and resolved at various University management levels (visit the web-pages <http://www.ysmu.am/am/forum>; <http://www.ysmu.am/am/information-arm/ask-the-rector/>, respectively).

The University rector and the vice-rector for academic affairs consider student needs-related issues and decide on respective solutions during the reception days scheduled for student meetings. Surveys conducted among students enable identifying students' judgment on various issues, specifically – sufficient capacity in academic resources, resource effectiveness, suitability of existing assessment systems, as well as effectiveness of currently offered modern assessment methods and teaching of novel academic components(see the questionnaires enclosed).

Standard 4.3. The institution provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities aimed at supporting student learning.

Specifically designed duty schedules are in place for professors at every academic department. In accordance with this schedule, the professor on duty, throughout the semester, provides academic orientation sessions for students on issues and topics addressed by students.

There is an accurately operating daily orientation schedule immediately before and in the course of examination session. These schedules are posted in the academic department at places readily visible. Dean's Offices ensure necessary orientation sessions on choosing elective courses; for instance, before matriculating into residency a necessity arises – for a narrow specialization -on receiving appropriate advice in respect of 4 elective courses from amongst 8 offered upon completion of the Master's Course.

In the reporting period multi-faceted orientation sessions have been held and a range of technical frameworks have been in place for ensuring extracurricular activities in the University. One of them is the Make-up Procedure (see the procedure). Pursuant to this Procedure, classes for students with poor academic standing(also having certain academic assignments to complete)are additionally organised at all the academic departments. To note, students are free in their decision-making as to the participation in these classes, which are organised on the basis of mutual consent among the dean, head of department and the student. This independent decision-making also enables the student to attend the course in

accordance with an individual schedule. Furthermore, academic departments are entrusted with the task to ensure the delivery of additional courses by skillful and experienced instructors only. Moreover, the student has the right to choose the person, whom he/she will be instructed by. This additional course is launched twice a week. Pursuant to this Order, students, who have maintained a high score on a certain discipline, yet have displayed interest towards subject-specific knowledge improvement, can also avail themselves of the right to attend these courses. In this case, the student revisits the course; however, he/she has no right to retake the examination. The timescale of extracurricular activities is approved by the University rector prior to commencement of the given term (see a timescale sample).

There are certain Class Make-up Procedures (see the procedures), pursuant to which additional classes, organised on a paid basis in case of absences, are held - once the term has been completed - prior to the beginning of the forthcoming semester: a timeline, when both students and instructors do not have heavy academic workload. The timescale of class make-up procedures is also approved by the University rector prior to commencement of the given term.

On the initiative of the Student Parliament language trainings are additionally organised for students.

Standard 4.4. There are special hours set for students to visit the faculty administrative staff for additional support and guidance.

There is a settled timeline for making a recourse to various bodies of University governance (see a sample of timeline). These timelines are posted at places readily visible and accessible. At certain faculties, Deputies to Deans are entrusted with tasks in respect of specific academic years (supervise activities within given academic year), which substantially facilitates the process of student recourse to administration bodies.

Every academic year covers orientation sessions held semester once or twice and managed by Deans and their Deputies. These sessions are attended by departmental heads, and/or respective departmental representatives (see working programme of the Dean's Office).

Within the sessions novel regulations and procedures pertaining to the academic process are introduced; these sessions also provide a firm platform for student questions to be addressed to University management bodies and representatives of academic departments.

Throughout the semester, meetings are convened once or twice between the University Rector and students, so that necessary clarifications and ascertainments are made on specific issues raised by students.

With a view to expanding the scope of information and making it more accessible to students, a body called Student Dean's Office has been created under every Faculty Board. It consists of monitors of courses, academic streams and groups. Monitors of academic streams are elected in the manner prescribed by the Statute. Moreover, the Student Dean's Office is committed to frequently holding meetings with students and bringing issues raised by students under the focus of the University Administration. This guarantees to not only speedily resolve the issue, but also ensures a higher effectiveness towards solution, since students are considered to be freely discussing their academic problems with their friends.

Standard 4.5. The institution has special student career support services that prepare graduates for employment.

The necessity of services promoting student career is underscored in the University Strategic Plan. Moreover, certain career-related tasks are set out; in particular, extensively promote career-related preparatory activities; assist student in terms of delivering services related to job searching and professional orientation; ensure independent access of Master's graduates to labour market; conduct a comprehensive study on employers' satisfaction in respect of professional competence of university graduates and effectiveness of educational programmes, in order to modernise programmes and improve graduate' employability; advance contractual cooperation with national and global customer organisations, etc. (see pages 6, 8, 9, 15, University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan, enclosed).

However, there is no career supporting centre currently operating at the University, yet there are some actions taken towards this objective. Hence, in order to strengthen the links

between university alumni and labour market, annual meetings are organised, in which head physicians of major regional Armenian clinics and regional governors. Information on available vacancies at medical establishments attend career prospects within a given region are introduced during the meetings. In 2008-2011 a survey (included in a research project), conducted among employers and graduates, assisted in identifying challenging issues in the educational programmes and the academic process, which impede students' access to the labour market. Respective proposals have been developed on the basis of this research project (see project outcomes, relevant articles). In the reporting period, e-resource 'doctors.job.am' has been launched disseminating information on vacancies and calls in the sectors of healthcare and medicine. Currently, the portal undergoes vigorous reconstruction.

Since the University is an integral part of the labour market, it has ensured a web-page (ysmu.am/en/information/vacancies) on its official web-site – a useful tool designed to provide information on available University vacancies and related data.

Pursuant to the policy adopted by the University, graduates with excellent academic achievements are offered certain jobs at the University academic departments and clinics.

Most importantly, account shall also be taken of summer practical rotations in different academic years; in particular, when students are engaged in practicing their knowledge while working as a nurse assistant or doctor's assistant in various Armenian clinics. This is another step promoting student professional orientation.

There exists internal network operating between students and Dena's Office of the Public Health Faculty, which ensures communication of information to the electronic accounts of students - information ranging from local vacancies to international calls within public health sector. This process raises awareness among students on public health labour market and thus, provides ideas on engaging in working practice even in the course of study.

The University resolves the issue with job placements to some extent, in cooperation with regional organisations and charities. Namely, in 2010, a trilateral agreement has been concluded between the University, Charity Fund for Armenian Relief and Regional Governor's Office of Lori region. In accordance with this agreement, the University has a mandate to organise residency academic process; the Fund provides financial assistance; the

Regional Governor's Office obliges to act as an employer; and the resident is obliged to engage in professional practice in this region at least for three years (see the contract).

The University has achieved integration into internationally acclaimed exchange programmes, such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, which comprise specific career promoting elements.

However, the University has no career supporting centre functioning, which, if available, would coordinate institutional activities in this sector. In addition, close scrutiny on labour market is not sufficient and the latter's involvement in the educational sector remains an issue largely unresolved.

Standard 4.6. The students are actively involved in the research the university majors in.

In the reporting period, the number of students involved in scientific-research workings conducted by the overwhelming majority of academic departments is not high (2 to 5 students). Those participating in the stated activities co-author papers published in local and international journals (see scientific-research report of the department). A greater number of students (15 to 50) are enrolled in the workings of departmental research groups and mainly produce structural abstracts.

Student Scientific Union (hereinafter referred to as SSU) is committed to coordinating scientific activities performed by students. It has been functioning since 1947 and operates with due regard to the provisions of its Statute (statute is enclosed). The Chairperson, assisted by the University Vice-Rector for Science, supervises Union activities, respectively.

Within the last five years the Union has launched annual conferences devoted to modern branches in medicine; namely, Information Energy Medicine, stem cells, Nanotechnologies and Nanomedicine. About 40 students have participated in these conferences.

Papers labeled as excellent at these conferences have been published in the scientific-informative journal of the University – in "Medicine, Science and Education" (one of the issues is enclosed).

Scientific cooperation among higher education institutions has also been actively pursued within 2007-2012. The Union actively cooperates, notably with various faculties of Yerevan State University. To note, four inter-university conferences on the issues of euthanasia, medical errors in abortion and transplantology have been launched within 2011-2012(see the conference agenda).

It is worth mentioning that all the students of the Faculty of Public Health (starting from their first year of studies)are engaged in scientific-research activities, which culminate in defence of a Master's thesis.

The Union has a membership in the Federation of Young Scientists Associations of higher medical institutions of the CIS countries (certificate is enclosed). In 2012 the University hosted members of the 9th annual meeting of federation.

However, the number of Union member students and those actively undertaking scientific activity is somewhat limited, which is largely predetermined by such factors as lack of motivation and limited free time across students and professors. These are the factors identified through the surveys conducted by the Union.

Now we are conducting some actions to improve the situation

- a. New procedure of admission of clinical ordinators was developed, according to which in case of equal excellence of students the coefficient of scientific activity will be taken into account.
- b. For supervision of students scientific works in questionnaire of lecturers are separated appropriate points, which are taken into account during competition based reemployment.

Standard 4.7. The institution has a special body that promotes students' rights protection.

Since 1992, the Student Parliament (Armenian Medical Student Parliament)acts under University as a self-government elective representative body in accordance with its Statute (statute is enclosed).

The Student Parliament (hereinafter referred to as “the Parliament”) is committed to ensuring student autonomy and student self-governance across the entire student body of the University. In addition, the Parliament has a specific mandate to protect rights and interests of students, foster social, scientific, intellectual, creative and cultural, as well as moral and psychological aspects of their development. The Parliament also achieves cooperation with higher education institutions, research, academic and other organisations both nationally and internationally.

Most importantly, the Parliament develops drafts of various decisions regarding student issues and academic processes; submits the drafts to University Administration for approval; contributes to adoption and implementation thereof (enclosed see points 3 and 12, Statute of the Student Parliament).

Structuring of the Parliament is achieved through applying the principle of representative elections. Each course having up to 125 students has one member in the Parliament; and where the number of students exceeds the stated figure – 2 members, respectively. Courses announce candidacies, and the students, for whom the highest number of ballots are cast, is considered an elected member.

Making reference to the composition of Student Parliament, it should be stated, that the Parliament consists of various commissions going as follows: Academic-Methodical Commission; Commission on International Relations; Commission on Media and Information; Commission on Cultural Affairs; Commission of Student Scientific Union. All these commissions act under the following bodies: Faculty of General Medicine, Faculty of Stomatology, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of International Students' Educational Affairs, Faculty of Postgraduate and Continuing education (Internship and Residency).

Academic-Methodical Commission is committed to identifying current issues in the academic process and offering solutions thereon. The student, involved in the Faculty Cyclic-Methodical Commission, provides the introduction of every issue raised by students. Furthermore, student body involvement in the university scientific boards constitutes up to 25% by proportionality, respectively. One representative from amongst students is also a member in cyclic-methodical commissions.

Issues raised by students are highlighted in the articles appearing in student magazine "Medicus", which is published under the supervision of the Student Parliament.

Since 2010 the members of Academic-Methodical Commission, for the purpose of protecting students rights, participate in the appellate process regarding knowledge assessment.

Academic-Methodical Commission regularly conducts surveys, outcomes of which are discussed by students and professors at issue-related meetings of the debate club.

The Student Parliament has a membership in a vast array of international bodies ranging from International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA) to International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF) and International Federation of Dental Students Association (IFDSA).

In certain cases the University Law Department, Dean's Offices and respective subdivisions are involved, if needed, in issues regarding the protection of students rights.

Standard 4.8. The institution has set mechanisms that ensure quality of the student services and the students are involved in the quality assurance practices.

There have been no relevant institutional bodies and regulations up to 2006, which would be aimed at assuring the quality services delivered to students; assessing the effectiveness of ongoing institutional procedures and activities taken by University subdivisions. Certain procedures - tailored to assure the quality of services delivered to students - were included in the mandates of the Department for Reforms and Integration established in 2006. Thus, for instance, knowledge assessment test system has been developed and employed by 2011; educational programmes and requirements thereon have carefully been reviewed; procedures for assessing professional competencies have been developed, etc. These reforms have indeed been implemented to ensure improvement of quality in educational, counseling, and other services delivered to students. Nevertheless, quality assurance, in its entirety, has comprehensively been achieved in 2011, when the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance was established and central and faculty commissions on quality assurance were created at the University.

Herewith, some of the provisions are stipulated, which are enshrined in the institutional policy on quality assurance developed by the newly established centre:

- ensure the compatibility of institutional qualifications with the national standards of higher education;
- ensure quality educational system based on final learning outcomes;
- ensure the effectiveness of relevant institutional assistance provided to students, which are provided for by the subject curricula (exhaustive listing is provided in the YSMU Policy on Quality Assurance; enclosed).

Certain measures - tailored to assess and improve the quality of services delivered to students – are reflected in the long-term Strategic Plan of internal quality assurance system on YSMU education (see the long-term Strategic Plan of Internal Quality Assurance System on YSMU education; enclosed). Only during last one year 1800 students were involved in quizzes directed to services of quality assurance of university (see results of surveys). As a result plan of future actions was developed which will be reported during scientific council meeting in May 2013.

Quality assurance toolset and procedures on separate institutional proceedings, in particular - tailored to provide student knowledge assessment, teaching faculty quality assurance, ensuring educational resources and supporting services are already developed.

In particular, questionnaires evaluating student assessment system have been compiled, ensuring the evaluation of currently operating system. Moreover, proposals have been submitted aimed at possible alterations to be made in the assessment system (questionnaire is attached). Surveys among employers, professors and residents have been conducted. The main goal of these surveys has been to assess the efficiency of currently employed academic system, separate components of educational programmes, knowledge assessment system, procedures for advancing the qualification of the faculty.

Set of tools tailored to assess the effectiveness of educational resources and supporting services has been developed. These tools have provided a margin for appreciating the compliance of existing resources with the requirements of educational programmes, as well

asthe effectiveness of supporting and counseling services and certain issues pertaining to this field.

It should be noted, that the application of streamlined mechanisms is not yet fully coordinated; there are no certain procedures, approved by the Scientific Council, which could be tailored to assess the effectiveness of services provided to students. These procedures are currently in the process of development.

The analysis report on the 10th criterion of institutional self-analysis report provides a reference point for comprehensively detailed analysis of quality assurance system on various services provided to students and other processes implemented.

Examples of good practice

1. Student body involvement in the University and Faculty Scientific Boards constitutes up to 25% by proportionality. Per student involvement in the activities conducted by the Faculty and Central Methodical Commissions.
2. Meetings of university administration with students are organised on a regular basis (rector and vice-rector).
3. Orientation sessions with students in different years of studies are regularly held within a term; heads of respective academic departments are also involved in these gatherings.
4. There exists a mode of communication between the University Rector and students through the University official web-site, which ensures regular feedback on relevant questions.
5. Surveys reflecting student needs and outlining issues raised by them are regularly conducted.
6. There exist clearly defined ways and structures of organising additional classes and orientation sessions.
7. The Student Parliament can safely be described as a self-government elective representative body committed to protecting student rights and interests.

Examples of not-so-good practice

1. Limited scope of University role in the system of student admission.
2. Inadequate involvement of students in scientific activities (insufficient level of motivation, lack of resources necessary for performing scientific-research activities, poor opportunities for merging teaching with scientific/research workings).
3. No career centre operating under University, which, if operating, could further students' career opportunities.
4. Majority of mechanisms designed for quality assessment and assurance of educational, counseling, and other student services; and procedures tailored to assess the effectiveness of those mechanisms still undergo processing and are not yet fully available.

CRITERION 5

Faculty and staff

The institution provides for a high quality faculty and staff to achieve the set of goals for academic programmes and institution's mission.

Ambitions: University has adopted policies for continuous improvement and promotion of highly qualified professional teaching staff taking into consideration the improvement of curricula and requirements for educational quality assurance.

Standard 5.1 The institution has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff capable of ensuring program provisions.

To shape and promote a high-quality staff the University has adopted the following policy:

- a. refresh and recruit younger faculty through increase of post-graduate vacancies, signing contracts with post-graduate students and reviewing the requirements referring the teaching staff qualifications,
- b. set comprehensive requirements for the teaching staff professional qualifications,
- c. set well-established mechanisms and procedures for evaluation of the teaching staff,
- d. set the teaching staff election procedures,
- e. improve the institutional plan for teachers' professional development with the whole teaching-staff enrollment(see 2006-2010 strategic program page 9, 10, attached).

Up to 2007 the faculty election at the University was conducted on a competitive basis. From 2007 to 2011 the election of teaching staff was carried out with the consent of the chief of the department based on a direct contract signed with the Rector. The above-mentioned form of recruitment was temporary and aimed at innovation of the teaching staff more actively with no contradiction with the faculty election regulations of the University and legislation of RA.

Since 2011 the teaching staff election has been conducted on competitive base in accordance with the updated version of the “Teaching-staff election procedures” (scientific council meeting N 3 of 25/05/2012 protocol, the procedure is attached).

In compliance with that procedure, each academic year Rector sets the list of vacancies of the current academic year. The Human Resources department informs the University scientific council secretariat about the need of announcing a vacancy according to the set rules at least 80 days before the expiry of the work contract of the corresponding instructor. The announcement on vacancies is posted on the University official website and in press with circulation of 2000 at least 2 months before the election date. After candidate passes the competition, the Rector signs a contract for up to 5 years (1-5 years) taking into account the assessment of the qualification committee.

During 2011-2012, 325 instructors from 30 departments participated in the competition for vacancies, out of which 295 passed the election procedure. Six percent (6%) of participants either were not approved by the qualification committee and the departments and/or were not elected by scientific councils (see protocols of qualification committee, department meetings and scientific council). In case of not being endorsed by departments and/or qualification committees the candidates has a right to participate in the tender announced by the University scientific councils. Currently, the required thresholds for different ranks of teaching staff (professor, associate professor, assistant) both for general and different fields of activities (methodological, scientific, clinical, etc.) are in process. This will allow evaluating the current procedures and the policy of teaching staff elections through monitoring.

In compliance with the ongoing regulations, the University can hire only short-term service providing teachers without competition, based on the contract signed with the Rector. As of 20.10.2011, the number of similar teachers is only 8.

The recruitment of supporting staff is organized in compliance with updated statute on the “Types of subdivisions and vacancy ranks” through which the forms and order of the University subdivisions, vacancy ranks and occupied posts are set (basically competitive) (the statute is attached).

Standard 5.2 The teaching staff qualifications for each program are comprehensively stated.

The teaching staff qualifications are formulated for each subject respectively; however, during the last 5 years they are not set for each curriculum. Currently, functions and job descriptions for the teaching staff ranks (professor, associate professor, assistant, teacher) are clearly stated in the above-mentioned election procedures. For example, the post of a professor requires a candidate with a doctorate degree with not less than 9-year pedagogical experience, 5 years of which holding an associate professor's position. The teaching staff job descriptions are set in the same order: i.e. in what educational level and by what curricula the instructor is eligible to teach. For example, an associate professor's responsibility is to conduct practical courses and lectures for bachelors, masters and postgraduates etc. (see the procedure).

Standard 5.3 The institution has well established policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.

In the reporting period - up to 2010 - the evaluation of the teaching staff was organized in each semester through surveys "the students' opinion on teachers". The questionnaire included 7 questions evaluating teacher's professional and pedagogical qualities. The survey outcomes were considered while signing contracts with instructors. Negative outcomes (below 3.5 in a 5-score system) can serve a base for contract breach or/and a new contract commencement only if the instructor received negative rating 3 or more times within 5 years (10 semesters).

Periodic evaluation of the teaching staff was carried out through mutual hearing of lectures. The results have been discussed at department meetings (see registers of mutual hearings).

In 2008-2009 the University Department of Reforms and Integration developed "The questionnaire on teacher's qualification evaluation". All University departments gave careful consideration to the mentioned questionnaire, proposals were made most of which were accepted. The final version of the questionnaire was again considered with chairmen and

people in charge of educational line. Only then the University central methodological board endorsed it (protocol of central methodological board and the questionnaire are attached).

Since 2011, when elections of teaching staff on a competitive basis were re-established, the policy of the teacher's qualification assessment has been set as a basis for elections. Pursuant to that policy, through the developed system, the instructor's activities in all spheres, such as methodological, scientific, post graduate and continuing education, clinical, administrative and social in a 5-years period, as well as the rating received by students were presented (questionnaire is attached).

The questionnaire includes about 80 sub-questions. Along with the necessary documentation the candidate fills in and submits the questionnaire. The corresponding faculty's scientific secretary on the basis of the presented documentation checks the completed questionnaire, counts the score and presents to the "Permanent board of teacher's qualification"(see attached the board list). Afterwards in a special convened meeting the board considers the received ranking based on the qualification questionnaire and the outcomes of lesson hearings carried out periodically once or twice a year by the chairmen and methodological board (see the protocols of lesson hearings and discussions).Further, after a direct interview with the teacher the board makes a decision whether approve or not teacher's further work activity. Finally, the decision is presented to faculty scientific council discussion, where a closed selection is held.

It is worth mentioning that notwithstanding 'Teacher Qualification Board' decision, the instructor is eligible to participate in the election procedure organized by faculty council.

Such evaluation procedure is organized for each teacher periodically in 1-5 years pursuant to the set duration on working activity outlined in the contract.

Standard 5.4 The institution promotes teacher professional development in accordance to the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external), Standard 5.6 There are set policies and procedures for the staff promotion in general and the young ones in particular.

Up to 2007 “Teachers’ qualification improvement” department was functioning at the University organizing professional development courses and trainings for instructors. Teaching staff participated in the mentioned trainings once in five years.

In 2007 the survey conducted among 457 instructors revealed that 65% of the teaching staff were not satisfied with the trainings, hence this method of training was called off.

New mechanisms and procedures of faculty development were developed and on 2012 unit of faculty development was opened.

In 2008 the survey conducted among 420 instructors revealed the needed qualifications that the teaching staff lacked. The majority of participants highlighted the importance of teachers’ professional development training courses, and 2/3-rd mentioned the need to promote professional skills, gain new knowledge and new methods of teaching. The survey also revealed that the teaching staff realized the importance of their participation in reforms designed for promoting educational quality and is ready and eager to take a full and active part in that processes (see the survey outcomes).

In 2010 several steps were performed at the University, for instance, the following model of teaching staff training courses was developed and experienced:30 young instructors from YSMU different departments(the list is attached)participated in 2-week activities in the frame of a project of special trainings for teaching staff organized by the Great Britain PRIME (Partnership in Internal Medical Education) organisation. Further, a model for YSMU teachers’ trainings was developed by that organisation and by the lecturers having participated in the courses organised by experts of Boston University School of Medicine.

The project consisted of training series of 5 seminars of practical classes, including the following topics:

1. teaching skills in small groups,
2. compilation of multiple choice questions (MCQ)(exam tests),
3. teaching skills in groups,
4. common skills of delivering lectures,
5. medical electronic resources and methods of their usage.

During 2010, 30 more instructors participated in 2 experimental trainings. At the end of the trainings paper-based survey was conducted, the participants expressed their positive attitude towards the project, its expediency, organisation, topic selection and the teaching staff (see paper-based analysis).

This system still keeps functioning, but it is not regulated and has a spontaneous nature. In 2012 the “Teaching staff qualification improvement” department was formed at the University educational subdivision (see the order), that began to promote instructors pedagogical and professional training, re-training and requalification measures, regulations and procedures.

During the last 5 years 474 university lecturers participated in professional training courses abroad - in activities of educational-methodological and scientific conferences (see the University General department register of protocols).

Standard 5.5. There is necessary permanent staff to provide for the coverage of qualifications adequately.

In accordance with the strategic plan, the University strives for having appropriate faculty staff to meet the requirements for curricula development and quality assurance.

Thus, currently 1114 lecturers work at the University, 173 of which have doctorate degree (amongst 107 are professors), 517 have PhD (amongst 201 are associate professors) and 424 assistants. The average age of university professors is 63, associate professors - 54 and assistants – 44 years. As of 10.10.2012 the student-lecturer ratio is 5530:1042=5:1.

According to the strategic plan policy, the faculty staff was refreshed at the University. Thus, during the last 5 years 34 people have entered the targeted postgraduate school; only 22 of them have continued their teaching activity at the University. Two persons from amongst 12 left for abroad to continue their studies; one person left Armenia and 9 postgraduates got more profitable offers from other organisations and currently work in other medical clinics. The fact that not all targeted postgraduates stayed at the University raised a great concern, so an analysis was carried out. The outcomes revealed that there are serious gaps in formulation of postgraduate application procedure. The vacancies for postgraduate school did not always

meet the requirements. Hence, the policy for provision of targeted postgraduate school vacancies was reviewed 2 years ago.

Currently, the classifier of the postgraduate school vacancies is modified, more places are available for more demanded professions (such as, Pathological Physiology, Pathological Anatomy, Phthisiology, etc.) (see the University Scientific department protocols).

The average age of the University faculty staff is reduced by 4 years in 5 years. Several times a year, University employees receive rewards, financial incentives, etc., however, the social status monitoring system for all ranks of employees (anticipated in the Strategic Plan) does not exist yet and employees' social satisfaction level is not evaluated. To ensure one of the issues of the Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan (stated as "to create a salary differentiation mechanism for the teaching staff and employees aimed at promotion of work efficiency and professional growth the "University departments' staff structure, ranks, educational load and payment" regulations were developed and put in action at the University (regulations attached). In 2012 the load of the teaching staff was reviewed (e.g. load for chairman decreased from 800 to 400, and for professors - from 800 to 700). The salary distribution procedure has been clarified (regulations attached). Salary increase took place twice, e.g. by 15-20% in 2007-08, and by 25-35% in 2012.

Nevertheless, there are not elaborated policy and procedures for the University faculty staff professional growth yet.

Standard 5.7 There is necessary technical and administrative staff to achieve its strategic goals.

In concord with the strategic plan, the University has always maintained the ratios of student, lecturer, supporting staff numbers (strategic plan, page 16) regulated by regulations on "Subdivision types and position ranks". In concord with it, the University subdivisions, position ranks, forms and procedures of filling vacancies (mainly on competitive base) are clarified (see attached). However, investigations revealed that changes should be made in the above-mentioned ranks: taking into account the outcomes in respect to department

peculiarities serving a basis of formation of supporting staff vacancies derived from department needs.

Currently, 508 employees work in different subdivisions of the University, 246 of them in administration while 262 are supporting staff meeting the licensing requirements of the University.

Examples of good practice

1. Teaching staff election procedure on competitive basis has been restored.
2. Innovations and reforms at the University are based on survey outcomes conducted among the teaching staff (e.g. more than half of the teaching staff participated in elaboration of teachers' qualification evaluation mechanisms).
3. Questionnaire on the evaluation of teaching staff qualification has been developed and put in action.
4. The query revealed issues and needs aimed at adequate organisation of teaching staff trainings.

Examples of not-so-good practice

1. Within the last 4 years teaching staff elections have been performed not on competitive basis.
2. Postgraduates' enrollment in teaching staff has not been fully carried out.
3. Procedures for teaching staff training and requalification have not been regulated during the last 3 years.
4. Teaching workload of the faculty staff is calculated due to lecturing hours only.

CRITERION 6.

Research and development

The institution promotes its research objectives, projects and expected outcomes.

There is a research ethos and culture, and mechanisms for the validating research outcomes.

Ambitions: Strategic Plan of Yerevan State Medical University (hereinafter referred to as “the YSMU”) clearly highlights the importance of ensuring association between higher education and research. This association will better promote development of these fields, serving also a key factor in resolving societal public health issues and thus delivering better healthcare. The importance of performing targeted research activities, which could be characterised as effective and innovative, and the significance of educating/training researchers in order to maintain and improve quality within higher education, as well as the necessity of the University integration into the European research area – all these stem from the mentioned association of higher education and research.

*A key direction (initial approach) towards implementing the strategy which reflects the University’s research priorities and ambitions appears to be the **ability** to combine quality and effective teaching with research activity conducted by the future specialist (2006-2010 Strategic Plan, pp. 3-17).*

Standard 6.1. The institution has a clear strategy promoting its research interests and developments.

A strategy has been developed relevant to the promotion of the University scientific-research capacity/potential and aimed at ensuring effective applicability of this

capacity/potential in the healthcare and social programmes. This strategy is based on development of interdisciplinary learning within doctoral and postdoctoral programmes and on structuring knowledge transfer competencies. It is worth mentioning, that implementation of these tasks will empower the emergence of greater labour market demands.

The following entities are committed to promoting and vast arrays of resources are in place to contribute to the workings conducted by University scientific structures. In particular, these bodies are the currently operating academic departments, task management laboratories, scientific-research centre, expert examination commissions coupled with the allied commissions, student scientific union, council of young scientists committed to ensuring scientific-research operations, as well as science coordination council. To note, significant portion of these scientific activities are illustrated and summarized in the form of doctoral research theses, postdoctoral research theses, and these documented data duly set out opinions and proposals on the theoretical value and the practical significance of the research conducted. Articles and papers are published in relation to these research workings in both local and international scientific journals; moreover, reports are prepared and presented at various forums and similar events. The regulations of the University Science Coordination Department set out certain functions going as follows:

1. approval of departmental priority areas of research and assistance in implementation arrangements thereof;
2. basic and thematic funding for scientific projects on a competitive basis –funding is allocated from the RA state budget;
3. research staff planning and ensuring their relevant education/training;
4. scientific passport on scientific-publication activity (documents relevant to all the materials)

(see Strategic Plan, Self-analysis, 2006-2001).

In addition, the University scientific unit drives forward the delivery of the policy on quality assurance with regard to research activities and studies, as well as procedural

benchmarking. Outcomes of the latter will serve a milestone for revisiting certain directions in the ongoing policy.

Standard 6.2. The institution has a medium and short-term programmes which address its research in a due manner.

In 2006 the University adopted clearly defined action plan with a view to conducting both theoretical and applied research consistent with priority areas. This objective was called forth to pursue the following actions: bring together diversified scientific directions while transforming them into targeted pathways. This would result in boosting the scientific value of interests and their utility. This objective was also financially beneficial and cost-effective to check that funds across science are most effectively aligned (targeted usage) and would not vanish into thin air.

In the reporting period long-term programmes consistent with five key science priority areas have been developed. The selection has been carried out consistent with the following principle: leading field specialist has submitted a scientific project. After professional expertise commissions have considered this project and delivered opinion thereon, it has been submitted to Science Coordination Council for a final approval. Since range of academic departments, laboratory units and clinics are enrolled in activities within the same priority areas, mid-term programmes, for a three-year period, relevant to scientific topics are established for each of these structures; meanwhile, some of these programmes are aimed to add value to the implementation of the long-term programmes.

Account is taken of the mid-term programmes when clearly defining short-term programmes subject to annual implementation. These short-term programmes are thematic components of individual scientific topics, being realized through researcher's doctoral and postdoctoral study stages. It should also be mentioned, that these topics, along with the

scientific-research activities, ensure change and modernization of scientific capacity in terms of human resources.

Since 2006 research activities conducted at the University in respect of long-term programmes within five key areas of science are fully funded from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as “the RA”). The financial resources are allocated within the programme aimed at maintaining and advancing the substructure of scientific and scientific-technological activities, which is being delivered through the basic funding in the form of a grant provided by the state – amounting to about AMD 90.00000 million. The University allocates the necessary financial resources for mid-term programmes, which are managed without external funding or financial assistance, yet constitute almost 50% of overall institutional mid-term programmes.

As for the funding of short-term programmes, it should be noted, that 10 to 15 doctoral and postdoctoral full-time research projects are state-funded; whereas, when registered on a part-time basis, the researcher is either self-funded or, if a member of University staff, institutionally funded, respectively.

Meanwhile, scientific projects conducted in small groups on an individual initiative may be financially assisted on a competitive basis in the scope of competition for contractual funding of scientific and scientific-technological activities, and this competition is organised by the State Committee of Science of the RA Ministry of Education and Science.

Annual average of the programmes accomplished within the period of 2006-2011 under five key scientific priorities existing in the University constitutes 43 mid-term programmes and 110 short-term programmes, respectively.

To note, the programmes defined as University priorities are still in progress; every topic approved has met mandatory requirements; moreover, when in process, these projects have not been rejected due to the opinions and observations made during the expert examination conducted by the Department of Scientific-Medical Organisation.

Making reference to the state call for competition on funding scientific projects, 26 scientific applications/proposals haven't met the threshold requirements in a competition on contractual (thematic) funding for scientific and scientific-technological activities.

Year-end reports in accordance with the projects are submitted, and these reports are subject to mandatory analysis in the institutional expertise commissions, and also in cases when the funding has been obtained from other sources, such as the State Committee of Science of the RA Ministry of Education and Science. In this case, the analysis is carried out within the body having allocated the funding. Where the project is not duly carried out, the University reserves the right to withdraw itself from delivering funding and assistance in respect of the programme to be implemented by respective department, taking no account of the fact, that the programme is a component of the priority project. In this case, reallocation of resources is achieved either within or out of the priority area.

Standard 6.3. The institution promotes development and innovation through sound policies and strategies.

The YSMU has set out clearly defined policy on conducting research activities, and this policy is delivered due to structurally integrated workings by three main interfaces supervising the scientific-organisational activities; namely, the Science Coordination Council, Department of Scientific-Medical Organisation and the Scientific Research Centre.

Through the setting-up and operation of the Science Coordination Council the University aims to plan and coordinate the scientific-research activity conducted at the platforms of Scientific Research Centre and clinical departments.

Throughout its activities, the Council follows provisions on YSMU Scientific Council activities (see the document attached). The Council is composed of laboratory supervisors of the Research Centre and separate researchers, who have extensive experience in scientific-

research activities; reputed scientists, leading faculty from theoretical and clinical departments of the University (see the Statute of the Science Coordination Council).

The Department of Scientific-Medical Organisation is a structural institutional component, which is committed to implementing programmes on scientific, research, clinical and experimental tasks; promoting programmes on educating/training professorial faculty; supporting essential services provided for medical equipment and technical means, advancing measurement methodology and other scientific-organisational programmes. The Department cooperates with university divisions (Scientific Research Centre, respective Faculties, Student Scientific Union, clinics), superior agencies, partner universities and other structures (see the Regulation of the Department of Scientific-Medical Organisation).

The University Research Centre is another structural unit under the University engaged in research activities.

These activities are carried out with due regard to currently operating relevant regulations and procedures in the RA approved by the University (see respective regulations and procedures). Several examples illustrating the activities of those structures are summarised below.

In the reporting period the University Science Coordination Council has approved 37 applications of research projects for the purpose of ensuring their participation in the competition on funding scientific projects called on by the state; 11 applications amongst them have met the threshold requirements for funding.

The Science Coordination Council and respective expertise commissions have approved 40 postdoctoral and 189 doctoral study proposals; 24 postdoctoral and 5 doctoral projects amongst them have been subjected to additional examination.

The Commission responsible for checking/evaluation of the primary material and methods has examined 158 projects; 34 projects have been rejected from the first round, and 16 projects have been subjected to additional examination.

21 postdoctoral and 134 doctoral proposals (the stage referred to as “ABD” – “all but dissertation”) have been defended; 2 postdoctoral and 12 doctoral theses amongst them have been subjected to additional examination (see Annex 1).

Standard 6.4. The institution emphasizes internalization of its research.

The University official web-site (www.ysmu.am) plays an important role in internationalization of scientific activities.

The web-site enables university students to subscribe and acquire large-scale information on events in medicine both locally and internationally. Moreover, it annually furnishes students with information and data in respect of about 200 international scholarships, grants, research fellowships, global conferences, seminars, etc. While raising awareness among researchers on global scientific events, the web-site also promotes their participation in those proceedings, thus providing for presentation of what has been achieved in medicine in Armenia; notably, on research projects accomplished and comparing these projects with international data available. This can be considered another gateway leading to enrichment of teaching and learning with up-to-date data and knowledge.

The institution provides explicit support and assistance to its young researchers; namely doctoral researchers and postdoctoral fellows, who are granted the opportunity to undertake research abroad achieved through individual invitations, scholarship programmes or research grants. Moreover, these institutionally supported researchers have the obligation to return to homeland upon completion of their research programme and work at the university at least for 3 years communicating their knowledge and applying their experience in the course of work.

Throughout its activities the University has implemented a number of research grants coupled with exchange programmes; has organised conferences of international nature,

leading foreign professors have shared their knowledge and expertise with students and the teaching faculty once on a guest lectureship at the University.

Researchers and professorial faculty provide scientific outcomes, the publication of which in journals of international acclaim is greatly underscored. There are also certain cases when the institution provides financial assistance for publishing research outcomes of significant scientific value.

The University has enabled students and professorial faculty to freely make use of international information databases (HINARI, UpToDate), where one can obtain overall overview on emerging trends and developments in medical sphere through scientific publications, articles and various papers.

Standard 6.5. The institution has well established mechanisms for linking research with teaching.

The mechanisms on association and combination of research activity and academic process at the University stem from the University Strategic Plan. Along with goal-oriented direction and delivery modes, these mechanisms address research labour market demands and aim at meeting certain academic standards to the extent possible.

The policy and procedures aimed at associating research activity and academic process may conditionally be divided into two groups: (a) conventional approaches and mechanisms, and (b) modern approaches and mechanisms.

The first group can be characterised as follows: (a) implementation of certain outcomes of research within the academic process in terms of their theoretical analysis and practical applicability, at the same time making reference to the primary sources (mostly applicable in academic departments involved in theoretical medicine); (b) presentation of scientific reports by students covering certain medical branch/issue.

The second group encompasses research workings conducted within the spheres of applied medicine and healthcare. This is the process specifically aimed at applying modern study methods and technologies in student groups for the purposes of advancing learner's practical and manual skills; effective diagnostic and therapeutic methods, being designed within a research project, are presented and applied by professors and reproduced by students (mostly applicable in clinical departments). A best illustration of the involvement of students in research can serve student research groups under several academic departments. Moreover, members of these research groups actively participate in implementing basic and thematically funded programmes of the given department, research laboratory; they also act as co-authors in the publications on research outcomes (for instance, about 15 to 20 students have been participants to the scientific project conducted at the Department of Pathophysiology and co-authored 8 to 10 publications).

Integration of students through student research groups – students who demonstrate academic excellence and display interest in science - into departmental scientific priority areas facilitates the process of further formulation of a professorial faculty. Meanwhile, cognitive abilities and skills of independent analysis of these young people will be value added to speed promotion of novel ideas in medicine.

Various forums (sometimes at an international level) and debate clubs, which are regularly organised by the Student Scientific Union, can also serve an efficient medium to launch discussions on current medical and healthcare issues.

When matriculating into Masters Course and Internship, account is taken of the student involvement in the research workings.

Examples of Good Practice

1. The YSMU Strategic Plan and currently operating policy cover the university research interests and ambitions.

2. There exist research traditions and specific research culture, as well as certain mechanisms to ensure the validation of outcomes of research activities.
3. There is a tendency to permanently improve and modernise research methodology.
4. There is a policy on supporting and promoting research activity undertaken by the young faculty.
5. Modern technologies designed for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, which are implemented in research workings conducted at certain clinical departments, are applied in teaching practice and in student groups.

Examples of Not-so-Good Practice

1. Not duly clarified mechanisms aimed at improvement of exchange of best practices, advancement of qualified specialist employability, career pathway prospects and improvements of financial sustainability.
2. Accurately targeted and specifically oriented usage of financial allocations remains largely unresolved in the research area. No effective translation of some fundamental research to production.
3. Precise mechanisms and tools, which are designed to associate research activity and academic process, are not yet at play in due effectiveness and scale.

CRITERION 7

Infrastructure and resources

The TLI has its own property and resources, which effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and objectives and create a learning environment

Ambitions. The University has accepted a policy, as of the priorities and capacities, aimed at the improvement of contemporary educational environment necessary for the implementation of educational programmes.

Standard 7.1. The institution takes due care to create a learning environment appropriate to the academic programs offered

The strategy programme attaches importance to the issues on lecture-room fund, building conditions, logistics base, reconstruction and equipment of clinics, library and other components of the educational environment. The strategy programme raises the necessity of modernisation of teaching methods, introduction of distance learning system, equipment of professorial chairs with training devices and materials, modernisation of educational and scientific laboratorial base, computerisation of educational process and records management. It clearly indicates also the necessity of carrying out repairs to living accommodations, education and production bases as well as economic buildings (See the University Strategy Programme, goal 4, page 10).

Currently, the space occupied by the University constitutes 88226m², the principal block of the building consists of 4 individual facilities wherein are mainly situated

theoretical professorial chairs. The clinical professorial chairs are situated in 29 clinics of republican significance and in 3 university clinics. The lectures of theoretical subjects are conducted in 12 lecture-rooms, where 1125 students may study simultaneously. The lectures of clinical subjects are conducted at clinics — in specially furnished lecture-rooms. The University also has laboratories, library, reading-room, exercise room, exercise halls, swimming pool, boiler house, medical aid room, public canteens, living accommodation as well as education and production base.

According to the strategy programme certain activities have been carried out during the reporting period: a new polyclinic building (“Manuk”), stomatological polyclinics have undergone repairs. The “Radiology Centre” has been furnished with contemporary equipment and put into operation; the “Muratsan” university clinic has undergone capital repairs and has been furnished, whereas the No 1 Clinical Hospital has undergone repairs partially. The territories of university clinics have been fully undergone planting. A thermal power station ensuring the heating and power supply of the University has been built, which is unique in the region.

As a result of acquisition of relevant equipment the institute of television conferences has been introduced. Two new journals have been established, more than 150 textbooks, manuals, monographs have been published (See the Protocol of Scientific Board of Yerevan State Medical University No 2 of 3 March 2011, the 2006-2011 Report on the Activities of the Rector [head of university]).

Despite the fact that as regards several criteria (e.g. space per 1 student) the lecture-room fund does not fully comply with the standards referred to in the Annex to the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 1490-N of 13 December 2007, the inquiries carried out among lecturers have shown that the educational environment, the lecture-room fund and laboratorial base qualify for the organisation of the process of teaching of syllabuses. Certain activities were carried out over last 2 years aimed at the improvement of lecture-room fund: 2 lecture-rooms have undergone capital repairs and furnished as well as 2 new lecture-rooms have been built.

Standard 7.2. The institution endeavors to secure adequate financial resources and distribution of the latter to provide, maintain and operate the facilities and equipment as needed to achieve its mission and objectives.

Under the estimate on disposal of funds, which is drawn up for each year, based on the expenses covered, budget entries made and the estimates provided by the state authorities during previous year, a distribution of funds is carried out among different university facilities and services.

Financial satisfaction of faculties is one of important point in financial policy of YSMU, so during the reporting period of 2007-2008 the salaries of lecturers were increased by 15-20%. As a result, in 2009 the salaries constituted 40% of the total expenses of the University, whereas in 2011 they constituted 52%. In the end of 2012 the salaries of lecturers were increased by additional 25-30%. The distribution of salaries of the professorial staff is carried out in accordance with the staff positions of professorial chairs, professorial grades, educational workload and the Regulation on remuneration (See the Regulation approved upon the Decree of the Rector No 101-M-2 of 19 October 2012).

The funding of several fields of university activities, such as library service (0.2% of total expenses), information systems (0.1% of total expenses) and laboratories (0.25% of total expenses) is not sufficient (See the accounting balance-sheets and the notices attached to the reports).

It is worth mentioning that the balance on the costs incurred in respect of servicing of education (salary of lecturers, finances directed to educational recourses, literature, classrooms, auditoria) has, under the total volume of expenses, constituted 88% (for the last three years), which certifies that the disposal of funds is goal-oriented to improvement of education.

Taking into consideration the costs incurred during previous years as well as the results of studies conducted, it is foreseen to increase the fund of salaries and social

allocations by 10%, the fund of means of acquisition of medicine, medical equipment, property, office and household utilities — by 10%, whereas the fund of current construction repair — by 15% etc.

http://ysmu.am/images/stories/downloads/doc_5.pdf

Standard 7.3. The institution has sound financial policies and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programs offered at the institution.

The funds of Yerevan State Medical University are generated at the expense of State budgetary and extra-budgetary entries. Student benefits, scholarships, funds received in result of training of doctors and nurses, the thematic scientific funding as well as the funds designed for the medical service constitute the main part of State budgetary entries (See the copies of the contracts).

The extra-budgetary entries are mainly generated at the expense of educational fees of paid students (about 90% of extra-budgetary funds): Funds received from national and international grants constitute 1.6% of the budget, in average. Each year the cost estimate on the provision and distribution of funds is drawn up on the basis of the balance of estimate for the previous year, the contracts ensuring the entries of current year and estimates provided by state authorities (the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Committee of Science of the Republic of Armenia), wherein are indicated the salaries, scholarships, expenses for the equipment of laboratories and library, economic expenses etc. (See the cost estimates of the Yerevan State Medical University): This cost estimate is posted in a generalised form on the official website of the University (http://ysmu.am/images/stories/downloads/doc_5.pdf). Further, each year an order on the organisation of procurement is issued by the managing customer (in this case — the Rector). All the subdivisions of the University submit a request on the necessary property, technical means and scientific researches as well as on educational-methodical materials by indicating the technical descriptions thereof. This proves that the university subdivisions participate in

the process of acquisition of resources. The process of procurement is organised by the Procurement Department established in 2011, in accordance with the Law “On procurement” HO-206-N of 22 December 2010 adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 168 of 10 February 2011. The transparency of the process of procurement is ensured as follows: the procurement is carried out, particularly, through calling tenders, the decisions are adopted by individual commissions approved upon the order of the Rector. The bid offers and goods provided under the tender are subject to the examination of the one responsible for the relevant field, who takes a decision on their compliance with the technical descriptions submitted by the subdivisions. In the end of each year, the balance of the budget of the University is published in the press with a print-run of at least 1000 copies, which ensures the transparency of disposal of funds of the University. According to the Law “On accounting” of the Republic of Armenia each year the University undergoes an audit, the data whereof are published in press and on the university website.

The efficiency of disposal of funds provided by the State is regularly examined by relevant authorities (Staff to the President, Territorial Tax Inspectorate, Committee of Science, Ministry of Education and Science, Agency of the Ministry of Healthcare). The efficiency of application of grants is monitored by the organization coordinating the relevant programme.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the assessment of needs of individual subdivisions does not underline the process of planning of funds which is mainly implemented without the participation of the employees and students. Thus, according to the inquires carried out by the Quality Centre of University only the 22% of the lecturers participates in the planning of funds and the small part therefrom participates in the selection of professional resources and procurement process (See the results of inquires).

Standard 7.4. The institution’s resource base supports the institution’s educational programs and its strategic plans for sustainability and continuous quality enhancement.

The strategy programme of the University attaches importance to the assessment of current situation of the lecture-room fund, the implementation of phase reconstruction, modernisation and further expansion thereof in compliance with the educational programmes and development issues of the staff.

During the reporting period works were done aimed at enhancing the resource base and bringing it in compliance with the educational programmes.

The library of Yerevan state Medical University, established in 1930, has been involved in the Armenian Libraries Consortium within which it has its webpage of electronic base of literature (<http://armunicat.am:8991//ARMA>, <http://armunicat.am:8991//ALEPH>).

Currently about 525000 pieces of literature are available at the library of the Yerevan State Medical University: over last five years 981 works of literature and 18735 pieces of literature were acquired, where only 6% thereof constitutes foreign literature (in English, French, German etc.)(See the 2007-2011 information books on “Statistical Analysis of the Activities: Libraries of Armenia”).

The reading-rooms of the University may service 290 readers simultaneously. In average 400 persons avail of the reading-rooms daily, that are open from 9:00am till 20:00pm, which constitute about 10% of students.

Nevertheless, the contributions made by the University, aimed at the acquisition of literature and improvement of library services, are considered as insufficient by us. As already mentioned above, only 0.2% of the budget is spent for this purpose. The participation of professorial chairs in the acquisition of new literature is insufficient as well: it is mainly carried out at the initiative of the library. The aforementioned is proved upon the results of the research carried out by the Educational Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre. Despite the fact that on annual basis the number of subscribed readers constitutes, in average, 6200 persons (the number of students is 5530), the 37% of inquired students has mentioned that seldom visits the library for the purpose of availing of the literature assigned thereto. The 45% of those often availing of the library services consider that the literature provided therein does not meet their educational and information requirements and is not

modern. The large part of the students as well as the 1/3th of lecturers from theoretical professorial chairs find that the departments are not sufficiently represented in the library.

The University is subscribed to the “Hinari, UpToDate, Armenia LibGuide” electronic services giving the students and the employees of the higher education institution the opportunity of having access to the bank of 17000 works of literature.

Starting from the 2010-2011 academic year ten Internet access points available for the students are operating at the University — WiFi Internet ensured in the large part of the territory of the University. It should be mentioned that only 10 computers out of 884 are available for students for free use. 65% of the inquired students and 81% of lecturers have mentioned that somehow avails of the University’s online resources. Despite the fact that the clinical professorial chairs of the University are situated in existing 29 clinical hospitals owned thereby and used under the right of ownership, and that in these professorial chairs are teaching medical practitioners, about 80% of the inquired students have mentioned that they are not satisfied with the educational resources contributing to the development of practical skills by indicating, as the main reason, not sufficient time provided for the work with patients. Technical resources as well as the scientific and laboratory base are not sufficiently represented in theoretical professorial chairs. The latter is proved by the fact that over last five years 0.3% of the budget of the University, in average, was allocated on an annual basis to the re-equipment of laboratories and information technologies.

Approximately 60% of the lecturers inquired by the Educational Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre has mentioned either that the resource base existing at the professorial chairs is not fully sufficient for the complete organisation of the process of teaching of the respective subject (See the results of inquiry). The practical skills acquired in course of learning are examined also during state final examinations. It is worth mentioning that all students of graduate courses have passed the above mentioned stage by receiving necessary scores in favour and admitted for final examination; nevertheless, the dominant part of those inquired has mentioned that the practical skills acquired during studies do not fully satisfy the requirements of the labour market, thus the list of required practical skills needs to be reviewed.

It is worth mentioning that learning resources in general and their effectiveness and usefulness are still not subject for systematical and periodical evaluation and still there are no any procedures managing this processes.

Standard 7.5. There is a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation.

Under its operational goals the University exercises records management through compilation, formulation, preparation, circulation and record keeping of documents.

The information and documentation processes of the University are covered by the internal disciplinary regulations of the Yerevan State Medical University, relevant Codes of the Republic of Armenia and other legal acts.

Two information flow channels are operating at the University — in a descending line (from administrative cycles to professorial chairs) and in an ascending line (from professorial chairs to the Rector). The information in a descending line is communicated through official letters, decisions, orders and ensures the contacts between Management Board, methodical commissions, Educational-Methodical Department, Dean's Offices and professorial chairs. The information in an ascending line is mainly transferred in the form of reports.

The provision of information and records management at the University is regulated by the General Department which exercises the following: the acceptance, registration, record keeping of letters and other official letters, documents addressed to the University as well as distribution thereof to relevant executors; registration and delivery of the letters and other official correspondence, documents sent on behalf of the University; registration of the documentation flow between structural subdivisions of the University; oversight over the time-limits designed for the execution of documents; filing the files of the Department with the archive of the University in a manner prescribed; ensuring the maintenance and application of the documents during the records management; methodical assistance in

respect of the accurate formulation and keeping records of the documents in the structural subdivisions of the University (See the Internal Disciplinary Regulation approved upon the order of the Rector of the Yerevan State Medical University No 01-M2 of 8 January 2008).

It should be mentioned that yet a single electronic system regulating the documentation flow ensuring the contacts between different subdivisions is not available at the University. The external information of the University is arranged by the Department for Public Relations which keeps control over the information published on Internet website, in newspapers, journals and bulletins.

Standard 7.6. The institution ensures the environment is safe and secure through health and safety mechanisms that also consider special needs of students.

The security of the University is ensured by the Security Department under the procedure provided for by the legislation and internal disciplinary rules. The Security Department is guided by the legislation, this Regulation, other rules of the University, the orders and executive orders of the Rector (See the Regulations).

The security functions of the University include:

- organisation of maintenance of the University, university buildings, premises, blocks of a building, complexes of clinical hospitals, polyclinics, cashiers, energy centre, gardens and territories adjacent thereto and the whole property;
- ensuring the security of students at the University;
- ensuring the security of the administration and employees of the University in course of fulfillment of obligations.

The anti-fire security and the safety of staff in case of emergency situations are organised in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

The security of the University is ensured through the checkpoints and round-watch service (See Internal Disciplinary Regulation of the Rector of Yerevan State Medical University, approved upon the order No 01-M2 of 8 January 2008). The University also

attaches importance to the issues of health maintenance of the staff and those of ensuring medical assistance (See the Strategy Programme, page 10, attached).

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the interests of the students with special needs are not always observed: not all the blocks of the building are provided with lifts, the entrances are not furnished with ramps designed for wheelchairs.

Standard 7.7. There are special mechanisms in place that ensure quality of the resources, their effectiveness, applicability and availability.

Within the framework of DIUS programme the Educational Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre, established in 2011, has elaborated tools and procedure for the evaluation of efficiency, use, accessibility of educational resources, according which a complex monitoring of planning, acquisition and use of financial and educational resources and servicing should be conducted on the basis of the detailed examination of the results of inquiries, study of needs, study of reports of relevant subdivisions, inspections and expert monitoring.

The results of inquiries have undergone processing and currently serve as a basis for the improvement of created tools (See tools and the procedure). The results of inquiries are represented in a generalised form in point (d) of this section of the self-analysis report. The questionnaire forms re-elaborated for the “Lecturers At Glance of Students” inquiries conducted by the Department for Practice of the University, also contain questions in respect of the use of didactic materials during lectures, representation of professorial chairs in the library and formation of practical skills during lessons (See questionnaire forms).

According to the Order “On approving the procedure for mandatory inventory of assets and obligations of organisations” of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Armenia No N-102 of 2 June 2000, each year is conducted a re-inventory of educational resources. Based on the reporting notices of the subdivisions, commissions are

established regularly which carry out the examination of educational material resources that are out of order or in an undue condition.

Nevertheless, the procedures for the assessment of efficiency, usability and accessibility of educational resources are not yet approved and these assessments and inspections are not of regular nature.

Examples of good practice

1. Construction works of large volume have been done: clinical hospitals have undergone repairs, a new radiological centre has been built, the territories of the University have undergone planting and 5 lecture-rooms have been furnished.
2. 150 works of educational-methodical literature have been published as well as 981 works of literature and 187358 pieces of literature have been acquired, 2 scientific and methodical journals have been published.
3. The salaries of the professorial staff has been increased twice.
4. The balance of the budget of University is published in press and on the website of the University.
5. The process of procurement is implemented on a competitive basis.

Examples of not-so-good practice

1. The process of assessment of needs of individual subdivisions does not underlie the planning of funds. The policy on distribution of funds is not approved.
2. Small part of lecturers and students participate in the planning of funds.
3. The number of students availing of reading-rooms is low.
4. The amounts spent on the library and information systems are not sufficient.

5. A single electronic system, exercising the documentation flow of different subdivisions, is not available.
6. Ramps designed for wheelchairs for students with special needs are not available.

CRITERION 8.

Public responsibility

The higher education institution (HEI) is accountable before the State and the public for the provided education, conducted study and used resources

Ambitions: On ensuring the comprehensive development and accessibility of the means of information, effective applicability of information technologies in all fields of activities as well as on increasing the efficiency of the application thereof (2006-2010 Strategic Plan, pp. 3-17).

Standard 8.1. A defined procedure on accountability is available at the higher education institution (HEI)

A defined procedure on accountability has been developed and applied at the Yerevan State Medical University during the reporting period, which is based on the creation of single management information base of the University as of the data of individual fields. Thus, conditionally (as in case of availability of contemporary media field the special differentiation is almost impossible) the information field existing at the higher education institution may be divided into internal and public information, the main purpose whereof is the adjustability with the requirements of the processes on ensuring the quality of education. Within the framework of internal information the following mechanisms have been applied:

(a) planned acquisition, processing and submission of information on current and term-based academic excellence of students;

(b) analysis and reporting on mid-term, examination and graduation results;

(c) regular updating, analysis and submission of the data on student community (See the reports submitted by faculty and university boards).

The following main sources have been applied in the field of public information:

- annual publications on the professions, volume and conditions of admissions;
- published catalogues and other advertisement/information materials;
- periodicals of the University (journal, magazine);
- different guidelines and bulletins on courses — in few (single) cases;
- websites of the University.

The following sources are more operative and efficient within the framework mentioned above:

1. admission;
2. faculty;
3. academic department [professorial chair];
4. medicine;
5. student parliament;
6. legal documents;
7. reports (on the long-term, mid-term, short-term activities of a professorial chair, Rector, deputy rectors, deans of faculties and other cycles).

Standard 8.2. The higher education institution (HEI) ensures the transparency and accessibility of the procedures and processes for the public.

Certain activities have been carried out aimed at ensuring the transparency of educational, scientific and research activities of the University, the accessibility to the public (internal

and external beneficiaries), bringing in compliance with the requirements defined (See the Law “On freedom of information” of the Republic of Armenia).

The above mentioned is precisely ascertained by the name list included in the section “Information” of the official website of the University:

- Grants,
- Subscription,
- Online resources,
- Medical and scientific journals,
- Independent auditor,
- Vacancies,
- Procurement,
- Ask the Rector of YSMU,
- Site map.

Standard 8.3. Sustainable mechanisms for contacts promoting the establishment of public relations are available at the higher education institution (HEI).

Three main types of contacts are available at the higher education institution (HEI): electronic, oral and written.

1. The window “Contacts” is available and is active on the website of the University, with the help of which everyone, if so wishes, may leave a message by indicating the e-mail address thereof and receive a reply. The window “forum” is continuously active, with the help of

which everyone may find the issues of common importance and the replies delivered thereto. It should be mentioned that the individual window “Ask the Rector” enables to forward the question directly to the Rector. Analysing the last information posted on the website it is found that the number of these questions is low, whereas the number of addresses is only 2, where four questions were addressed to the Deputy Rector for Education and the one — to the Deputy Rector for Science.

2. The Rector of the University and deputy rectors have fixed days for receptions during a week. Nevertheless, the problem is that in addition to official visits protocols on meetings are not drawn up, therefore it is difficult to find out the effectiveness of these meetings. Thus a mechanism promoting public relations is available, but a mechanism assessing the contacts is not available.
3. As regards the written applications, the evaluation of the contacts thereon is possible to supervise. In case of the Rector of University all applications are admitted for consideration by the General Department, whereas in case of other cycles — by relevant secretariats. Nevertheless, the procedures are not precise either regarding, for instance, the time periods during which a citizen should receive a reply.

The Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre has evaluated the rating of the University through contacts. According to this method the applied criteria state that the higher education institution (HEI) should have a defined procedure for accountability, ensure the transparency and accessibility of procedures and processes for the public, as well as sustainable mechanisms on contacts promoting the establishment of public relations and those on transferring the values to the public should be available at the University. As a result of the research carried out by the Quality Centre all factors have been detected, the

further improvement whereof will contribute to the increase of the public rating of the University (See the research carried out by the Quality Centre).

As a conclusion, in general, the mechanisms on contacts promoting the establishment of public relations are available but precise procedures ensuring the contacts are not available.

Standard 8.4. Mechanisms on transferring knowledge (values) to the public are available at the higher education institution (HEI).

A number of mechanisms are available at the Yerevan State Medical University through which professional and non-professional information is regularly transferred to the public. Thus, the main tools of the YSMU, which communicate information to the public, are as follows: the website of the higher education institution (HEI) (www.ysmu.am) and two official newspapers (“Future Physician” and “Medicus”). The latter are means of information revealing existing problems at the University and containing certain analysis thereon. The information contained therein is mainly non-professional and accessible for everyone. The higher education institution (HEI) regularly carries out professional and awareness raising activities in different target groups of the society. One of them is the traditional programme “Healthy Lifestyle” having been launched at the initiative of the Student Parliament, which exercises the transfer of knowledge on the important medical and modern issues particularly among school-aged children both through direct meetings, courses and printed booklets. Awareness-raising programmes with different formats are organised also among residents of borderline regions of the Republic of Armenia.

Individual employees from different professorial chairs of the Yerevan State Medical University, deemed as the best experts of narrow professional field, regularly are invited at different healthcare television and radio programmes, often cooperate with them through

transferring information which is considered as appropriate from the professional point of view and which interests the general public.

A special policy is not available at the University, nevertheless, many of the lecturers of the higher education institution (HEI) participate in this process on a voluntary basis.

In the field of science operative mechanisms of transferring knowledge are also available at the higher education institution (HEI). Thus, international scientific conferences are regularly held at the Yerevan State Medical University, where the wide university community is granted the opportunity of familiarising with the studies carried out in the medical field both by native and foreign advanced scientists. The scientific journals “Medicine, Science and Education” and “New Armenian Medical Journal” are published about four times a year which is aimed at disseminating modern information in the professional scientific and educational fields.

Examples of good practice

1. Significant work has been carried out (is being carried out) for the provided education and conducted study, for the purpose of being accountable before respective cycles and the public.
2. The procedure on accountability existing at the Yerevan State Medical University provides for more goal-oriented and effective tools:
 - university websites;
 - regular reports on the activities of different cycles, submitted thereby;
 - journals and newspapers reflecting the public, educational and methodical and scientific activities, published by the higher education institution;

-organisation of question-and-reply process, discussion boards, interviews, speeches on radio and television.

Examples of not so good practice

1. A culture in respect of the criterion regarding the issue in question has not been completely established and is not being implemented.
2. As compared with the provided education and conducted study, yet an accountability relating to the used resources, which should be precise and justified by metanalysis, is not available at the University.
3. The operation of the mechanism ensuring contacts is low (probably the main reason for this is the non-confidence of the applying party in respect of the expectations for the responsible and full reference made to the questions raised).
4. Different guidelines are not given an elaborated and complete form (for example, regarding the rights and responsibilities of students of 1st form, students of graduation form as well as those of lecturers).

CRITERION 9

External Relations and internationalization

The institution promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.

Ambition: The University seeks to expand the current experience of cooperation with leading Armenian and foreign higher education institutions; to intensify the participation in programmes of the European Partner Universities, local and international interuniversity organisations; to develop the mechanisms of mutual recognition of learning outcomes and transfer of credits, thus fostering the academic interuniversity movement of students and professors and strengthening the international ranking of the YSMU.

Standard 9.1. The institution promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement and internationalization.

The comprehensive development of foreign relations and the internationalisation of the activities of the University are the priority directions of the development of the YSMU, and the policy aimed at the improvement of these procedures is clearly expressed in Strategy Programmes of the University. Under the Strategy Programme (see the YSMU Strategy Programme, pp. 15-16), the University aims at:

- expanding the collaboration with Armenian and foreign higher education institutions;
- fostering the academic interuniversity movement of students and professors;
- ensuring the participation of foreign experienced specialists in elaboration and introduction of educational and scientific programmes of the University;

- carrying out accreditation of academic programmes in accordance with international standards, and receiving international expert assessment and recognition.

The Scientific Board of the University periodically refers to the external relations and the internationalisation of the University; these issues are the constituent part of long-term, mid-term and short-term planning of the University. The Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships regularly appears before the Scientific Board of the University with a report introducing the accomplished activities and the future plans. The issues concerning the internationalisation of the University are also included in the work plans of the Office for Academic-Methodical Affairs, as well as in the reports of the Head of the Office and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs.

The web-site of the University is available not only in the Armenian, but also in the Russian and English languages. The international collaboration and exchange programmes, as well as foreign students admission conditions are placed on a separate page of the web-site.

Standard 9.2. The institution's external relations infrastructure ensures smooth flow of the process.

The Office for International Affairs coordinates the process of external relations and internationalisation of the University. Head of the Office is, *ex officio*, the Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships. The Office comprises the Department of International Cooperation and Activities with Foreign Students. The Office for International Affairs also exercises supervision over the activities of the University dormitories, where foreign students primarily reside. The main tasks of the Office are as follows:

- ensuring the cooperation of the University with other educational institutions, including foreign higher education institutions;
- arranging the involvement of foreign nationals in undergraduate, postgraduate and preparatory education systems;

- arranging the activities of the representatives of the University in foreign states, for the purpose of disseminating information on the University, as well as the admission and education procedures currently applied in the University;
- studying the requirements of the legislation relating to higher medical education in the countries of foreign students, with a view to effectively organising the education of foreigners;
- coordinating the procedures for recognition of the University qualification, carrying out market research in the field of medical education;
- supporting foreign students to receive the RA visas and residence status, etc. (see the Regulations of the Office).

The Office for Educational-Methodical Affairs of the University comprises the Dean's Office of International Students' Education Affairs and the Premedical Department. The Dean's Office of International Students' Education Affairs carries out educational-methodical, scientific, organisational and other activities relating to the international students' education; coordinates the daily activities with academic departments and students.

The Premedical Department organises the education of those foreign students whose language skills and knowledge on natural sciences are not sufficient to study specialised disciplines. Languages (English, Armenian, and Russian) and fundamental disciplines such as physics, chemistry and biology are taught in the Premedical Division.

Postgraduate and Continuing Education Department of the University organises the education of those foreign students who express their willingness to specialise in different medical and pharmacological fields.

About 1338 students from 28 countries study in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in 2012/2013 academic year.

The Office for Educational-Methodical Affairs of the University coordinates the transfer of the Armenian and foreign students to and from the YSMU.

The annual planning of the activities of the Office for International Affairs constitutes the integral part of the mid-term planning of the YSMU. It is prepared by the Rector, Head of the Office/Vice-Rector of the University, who directly manages and supervises the

implementation of the planned activities. The Rector of the University carries out ongoing monitoring, based on different sources of information. It includes meetings with students, letters received from students and their parents, information provided by embassies, and foreign representations of the University. However, the University still lacks clear-cut criteria for assessing the level of effectiveness of external relations and internationalisation.

The Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships of the University regularly reports to the Scientific Board of the University on the effectiveness of the implemented activities, and the latter assesses the effectiveness of the activities and issues new assignments (see the report of the Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships, Strategy Programmes in the field of international cooperation during 2012). The issues relating to international students' education are also included in the reports of the Rector and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs of the University.

Standard 9.3. The institution promotes fruitful and effective collaboration with local and international counterparts.

The University cooperates with foreign counterparts and the University alumni around the world, by carrying out academic trainings, thus developing the up-to-date content of academic materials, informing on medical and healthcare issues of international importance through congresses, seminars and workshops.

The YSMU has established close contacts with medical universities and healthcare institutions of different countries, as well as international organisations in the areas of medical education and healthcare; it has signed and updated various cooperation agreements with well-known medical universities in the CIS, Europe, Central Asia and the US, including:

- Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany;
- Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University, France;
- Boston University School of Medicine, USA;
- Columbia University, College of Physicians & Surgeons, USA;

- Georgia Neurosurgical Institute, Mercer University School of Medicine, USA;
- Open Medical Institute (American-Austrian Foundation);
- Implementation of joint programmes with the University of Luebeck/Research Center Borstel (Germany), Tbilisi State Medical University (Georgia);
- National University of Pharmacy, Kharkov, Ukraine;
- University of Kansas Medical Center, USA;
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Alexandria, Egypt;
- University of Camerino, Italy;
- Stavropol State Medical Academy, Russia;
- David Geffen School of Medicine at University of Columbia, Los Angeles, USA;
- Universitätsklinikum Düsseldorf, Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf;
- Riga Stradins University;
- Université René Descartes Paris 5, France;
- L'Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium.

The YSMU carries out cooperation with the above-mentioned higher education institutions in the following fields:

- (a) exchange of scientific researchers;
- (b) exchange of students;
- (c) exchange of publications;
- (d) carrying out joint medical projects;
- (e) holding joint conferences (see the cooperation agreements with the above-mentioned organisations).

During recent years, in particular, numerous faculty and student exchange programmes have been established, as a result of which the students and clinical residents of the University have completed short-term internships abroad in leading clinics and medical institutions. Those medical institutions and higher education universities include:

- Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg, Germany;
- Clinic Ernst von Bergmann, Potsdam, Germany;

Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

Within the framework of exchange programmes, the University also cooperates with the following organisations:

Birthright Armenia/Depi Hayk Foundation;

International Federation of Dental Students Association;

International Pharmaceutical Students Federation;

European Medical Students Association (see the agreements, web-page: <http://www.ysmu.am/am/international-arm/exchange-programs-arm>).

During 2007-2012, more than 40 physicians have undergone trainings — within the framework of the university cooperation — in the clinics of Europe and the USA. During the same period, more than 80 professors, physicians and clinical residents participated in Salzburg Medical Seminars (Austria). Since 2000, the YSMU has a membership in a number of international organisations, namely:

- International Association of Universities;
- World Federation of Medical Education, as a member of Association of Medical Education in Europe;
- Association of Dental Education in Europe;
- International Federation of Dental Students Association;
- International Pharmaceutical Students Federation;
- European Medical Students Association;
- Guide Association - Global Universities in Distance Education.

The World Health Organization recognises the YSMU as the only state medical university of the Republic of Armenia: the University is included in the World Directory of Medical Schools.

The YSMU is also included in various international educational and scientific programmes, including in the DIUSAS and PISQA projects, as well as Erasmus-Mundus and the World Bank programmes (see the agreements).

The University has its representations in the Russian Federation, India, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates and Nepal, which provide appropriate information about the YSMU to the relevant institutions and citizens of the countries concerned; as well as examine — for the purpose of effective organisation of foreigners' education — the requirements of legislation on higher medical education in the corresponding country (see the web-page: <http://www.ysmu.am/am/international-arm/foreign-representatives-arm>).

All the issues of the scientific, scientific and information journals (“New Armenian Medical Journal”, “Medicine, Science and Education”) are sent to the libraries of several foreign countries (according to the List of the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC)).

Standard 9.4. The institution ensures the appropriate level of a foreign language for internationalization purposes.

The University has provided necessary conditions for the students and professors to develop the level of their knowledge of foreign languages.

Teaching of foreign languages is included in all educational programmes (see the curricula of the educational programmes). However, the academic hours allocated for teaching foreign languages are not sufficient to ensure the necessary level of knowledge of a foreign language. The graduates' level of knowledge of foreign languages is taken into account for the admission to the clinical residency and postgraduate course.

The selection of new professors is carried out in the University by taking into account also the appropriate level of knowledge of a foreign language.

The University has provided relevant conditions for the continuous development of the professors' level of knowledge of a foreign language. For this purpose, relevant courses are organised in the Academic Department of Foreign Languages of the University (see the schedule).

Only the professors holding a relevant certificate issued by the Commission of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia are entitled to teach a foreign language (English) in the University.

Teaching of all educational programmes in the University, except for the mother tongue, is carried out also in the Russian and English languages. Teaching of about 30% of the students of the University is carried out in these languages.

The University also arranges guest lectureship programmes within the framework of which well known foreign visiting specialists and professors deliver lectures in foreign languages (see the web-page: <http://www.ysmu.am/am/international-arm/visiting-professors-arm>).

The academic staff of the University regularly participates in the congresses, seminars, workshops and summer schools in the leading foreign universities and clinics.

The library of the University is equipped with modern professional and scientific literature in foreign languages; the books are also available online. The University provides the professors and students with the opportunity to access — free of charge — the UpToDate electronic database and other programmes (see the web-page: <http://www.ysmu.am/en/information/online-resources>).

The scientific and medical journal of the University “New Armenian Medical Journal”[⌘] is published in the English language. “Medicine, Science and Education” and “Future Physician” journals, as well as the Student Parliament “Medicus” journal publish articles in the English and Russian languages.

Examples of good practice

1. The University has established close relations with medical universities and healthcare institutions of different countries, as well as international organisations in the field of higher medical education and healthcare.

2. Through numerous exchange programmes concluded with foreign universities and healthcare organisations, the students and clinical residents of the University complete short-term internships abroad in leading clinics and medical institutions.
3. The University has provided necessary conditions for the students and professors to develop the level of their knowledge of foreign languages.

Examples of not-so-good practice

1. The University still lacks clear-cut criteria for assessing the level of effectiveness of foreign relations and internationalisation.
2. The academic hours allocated for teaching foreign languages in the educational programmes of the University are not sufficient to ensure the necessary level of knowledge of a foreign language.

CRITERION 10

Internal quality assurance

The institution has a set infrastructure for internal quality assurance, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual development of the institution

Ambitions: The University pursues a culture of quality and seeks to develop respective institutional system of quality assurance. While assessing activities of University divisions, this system will aim at identifying issues, solution of which will contribute to improving the quality of currently ongoing institutional processes and existing systems; will further sustainable development of the University and its international acclaim (see University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan p.7, p.8, attached).

Standard 10.1. The institution has internal quality assurance policies and procedures that are in line with the ESG standards

The University Strategic Plan clearly sets out the necessity of establishing a quality assurance system at an institutional level. In particular, the policy statement includes:

- ensure development of an institutional system assessing teaching quality;
- ensure, that the university system of assessment and evaluation for teaching quality be relevant to the European and international criteria;
- develop and introduce an institutional system of teaching quality assessment and assurance in accordance with the criteria defined by the European National Qualifications Framework (ENQA) for higher education;
- ensure, that the institutional platform is fully involved in the Bologna reforms; create an institutional body coordinating the Bologna process; develop and launch a five-year

action plan outlining relevant activities in this regard (see University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan pages 7, 8, 15, 16, enclosed).

It was not until 2006 that a body was established assessing the activities of departments and divisions at Yerevan State Medical University (hereinafter referred to as “the YSMU”). However, the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Higher Education” was adopted preceded by the ratification of the Bologna Declaration by the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as “the RA”) in 2005. Consequently, the necessity of implementing the European system of education quality assessment at Armenian higher education institutions was largely conditioned by the said actions. A response to this challenge was that a Department for Institutional Reforms and Integration Policies was set up at the University in 2006. Departmental activities were coordinated by the University Vice-Rector, who was also the head of this department (see Vice-Rector’s Order).

The Department had a major mandate to examine diverse practices in educational realm across the European and American schools of medicine and draft proposals on making amendments to the education process deriving from the Bologna requirements.

The Department was also involved in education quality issues; however, these workings could not safely be characterised as coordinated. In cooperation with the Cyclical Methodical Commissions of Faculties, the Department was also engaged in workings ranging from reviewing curricula, achieving horizontal and vertical integration thereof, to developing as well as applying a test-based system and designing professional knowledge assessment guidelines. Nevertheless, the departmental policies and strategies weren’t useful reference points for carrying out quality assessment and assurance processes. Moreover, fundamental principles underpinning all arrangements for conducting quality assurance activities – human resources and tangible assets – were not sufficient.

The necessity to setup an institutional body, which would be involved in education quality assessment and assurance was revealed after the departmental staff had participated in numerous programmes, such as Tempus, PICQA, DIUSAS, as well as the Higher Education Reform as a component of the Education Quality and Relevance World Bank project, and

had studied quality assessment systems of renowned European higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as “the HEI”); meanwhile examining and assessing the effectiveness of the activity of the Department for Institutional Reforms and Integration Policies. Thus, the Department for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance was established at the University in 2011, driving forward the delivery of quality assessment and assurance system (see University Rector’s Order on establishment of the new department).

The staff of the said Department, and respective commission faculties mainly consisted of officers, who had undergone specifically designed and quality-related training courses.

Once the Department was established, policies, strategies of the centre for quality assessment and assurance were designed; regulations and procedures were established aimed at assessing the quality of activities conducted across various institutional sectors. For this purpose, a vast array of instruments were designed going as follows: assessment procedure for student knowledge grading scheme, procedure for annual monitoring of educational programmes, procedure for conducting surveys among students on teaching quality and effectiveness, procedure for drafting self-evaluation report, guidelines on faculty certification/qualification, etc. (see the Centre policy, strategy, toolset on assessing the quality of academic resources and counseling services). The questionnaires drafted have been subjected to consideration of respective Faculty Boards; afterwards surveys have been conducted outcomes of which have been posted at the University web-site (see University quality-related web-page). In addition, a methodical manual for education quality assessment and assurance is currently being designed (see manual drafts):

Standard 10.2. The institution allocates sufficient time, material, human and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.

From 2006 to 2011, the Department for Institutional Reforms and Integration Policies (with two staff officers) has been operating under University. Departmental activities have been

accordingly coordinated by the University Vice-Rector, who has also headed the department (see the Orders). There have been no other structures committed to quality assessment and assurance at faculties and other subdivisions, except for the said staff officers and the vice-rector coordinating departmental activities. This was challenging the organisation and achievement of integrated and coordinated workings with regard to quality assurance. In order to resolve this issue, several institutional bodies were established in May of 2011; namely “Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance”, “Standing Committee on University Education Quality Assessment and Assurance”, respective Faculty Commissions(see the Orders). Currently, the Centre has a staff composed of five officers, who have undergone quality-related trainings. Five members are included in there Faculty Commissions and 11 members are involved in the workings of the Standing Central Committee (see the Orders and biographies of members of Commissions/Committees):

In order to organise the Centre’s workings with due consideration and in a timely manner, two rooms - renovated and fully furnished - have been arranged at the Main Chamber of the University. Allocation of respective human resources and tangible assets resulted in implementation of the short-term strategic plan on quality assurance developed by the Centre. This, in turn, has accounted for measurable outcomes (see Centre’s Strategic Plan and Performance Analysis).

Making reference to the institutional participation ensured in the World Bank Programme, it should be mentioned that, this Programme envisages invitation of European educational quality experts for the purpose of launching training courses, as well as organise secondments of local officers - ensuring university education quality assessment - to various European institutions to undergo specific trainings (see the agreement concluded within the Higher Education Reform programme under the Second Education Quality and Relevance Project of the World Bank).

Both the Quality Assessment and Assurance Department staff and Commission members have participated in the PICQA and DIUSAS programmes under TEMPUS; nine university officers have undergone respective quality-related training at various European establishments in the scope of these programmes.

Standard 10.3. The quality assurance strategy, policies and procedures have a formal status, are publicly available and include a role for students and other stakeholders.

No involvement of external stakeholders in the quality assurance system was recorded between 2006 and 2010; meanwhile, the involvement of internal stakeholders could safely be characterised as not having a systematic nature. Within the course of 2006-2011 annual meetings with university graduates and employers of Armenian regions have been regularly organised. These meetings aimed at considering labour market demands, evaluating satisfaction rates among employers with the professional competencies of University graduates, etc.

The Policy of the Quality Assurance Department clearly underscores the importance of stakeholders' involvement in quality assurance processes. Pursuant to this provision, it is necessary to ensure the engagement of students, alumni and employers in the internal quality assessment and measure satisfaction rates, respectively. In furtherance, since 2011, instructors, field specialists and students are engaged in the Institutional Standing Committee and Faculty Commissions for Quality Assessment and Assurance (see structure of Commissions and Committees). Moreover, both internal (instructors, students) and external (residents, practicing physicians, heads of divisions, etc.) attend the meetings convened and participate in surveys conducted by the Commissions on Educational Quality. Thus, within the last two years, surveys among stakeholders have been conducted twice, aimed at assessing the effectiveness of currently existing institutional academic system, separate components of academic programmes, grading schemes, procedures for improving faculty qualification (see survey analysis).

Standard 10.4. The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

The analysis of the effectiveness of workings conducted by the Department for Institutional Reforms and Integration Policies was carried out only once; specifically, at the end of 2010. As to the effectiveness of quality assurance system, its assessment was carried out the year following its implementation in 2011. The Statute and working programmes of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre were drafted in 2011; responsibilities and tasks were respectively entrusted upon officers concerned, the Centre's internal organogram was set up. Respective staff officers and commission members underwent training in Armenia and abroad.

Toolset and procedures have been developed tailored to assess student academic performance, assure teaching faculty quality, ensure academic and supporting resources, maintain effectiveness of information systems as well as ensure transparency across information provision. In addition, certain activities have been conducted aimed at linking graduates to career information resources and liaison activity with employers and other opportunity providers and involving them in quality assurance processes. In particular, questionnaires assessing marking scheme/grading criteria, enabling the assessment of the currently existing scheme; proposals have been submitted on making possible changes in the scheme. Furthermore, surveys have been conducted among employers, instructors and residents, in order to assess the effectiveness of currently existing academic system, curricula and its separate components, grading schemes, as well as procedures for improving faculty qualification (see survey analysis).

A toolset assessing the effectiveness of academic learning resources and supporting services has been developed, thus, enabling to identify the "know-how" when making available resources relevant to requirements of educational programmes, as well as the effectiveness of supporting and counseling services and priority issues in these fields. Pursuant to the objectives mentioned above, a student identity card system has been processed and is currently introduced into the University structure. This system will enable studying

feasibility and effectiveness of instructional support services. In addition, certain standards and a toolset assessing the quality of teaching faculty are developed, which are applied pursuant to the procedures for elections and employment of instructors on a competitive basis.

In order to set up a database on quality assurance system and ensure permanent input of the data on institutional ongoing processes in a quantified form, the Department for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance has established a set of key indicators aimed at assessing institutional activity. These indicators encompass tangible assets, financial and human resources, as well as indicators on student mobility (see the set of key indicators of assessment of institutional activity).

The short-term strategic plan of the Institutional Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre may be considered accomplished/achieved; procedures on certain elements of the plan are still in progress and the conclusion thereof is anticipated within the course of upcoming year.

The long-term strategic plan of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre envisages annual analysis of effectiveness of activities conducted by the quality assurance system; relevant standards are also devised. Action Plan towards improvement of the quality assurance system will be designed during the self-evaluation carried out once a year in the University (see the Strategic Plan of the Centre).

The self-evaluation conducted currently by the University will also foster the improvement of activities carried out by the institutional quality assurance system.

Standard 10.5. The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient background for the success of the external quality assurance processes.

It was not until 2006 that sufficient grounds were established for external evaluation. However, the self-analysis conducted at the University for the first time will provide for

such opportunities. For the purpose of drafting the self-analysis report a respective commission has been established by the University Rector's Order (see the Order). The Centre for Quality Assessment and Assurance - established in 2011- clearly sets it out in its strategic plan the necessity of ensuring sufficient grounds to provide for external evaluation (see the Strategic Plan of the Centre). Annual reports and self-analysis reports envisaged in the Strategic Plan may serve useful reference points/grounds for external evaluation experts. Currently, the necessity of annual self-analysis report is clearly set out under a separate heading in the revised procedure regulating the activities of University subdivisions (see new regulations of the Office for Academic-Methodical Affairs).

Standard 10.6. The internal quality assurance system provides for the transparency of the processes unfolding in the institution through providing valid and up to date information on the quality of the latter.

The Policy of Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre clearly stipulates the necessity and importance of ensuring transparency across institutional activities and quality assurance processes. Taking due account of this issue, there exists a web-page under University official web-site, which is specifically designed to publicize Centre's policies and strategies, outputs of studies conducted by the Centre and concise summaries of reports. Twice or thrice in a year, certain meetings with students and the faculty are convened, aimed at considering the workings performed by the Centre, priority issues and possible solutions thereof (see The Policy of Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre and respective web-page under University web-site).

Examples of good practice

1. The body composing Institutional and Faculty Commissions for Quality Assessment and Assurance has been approved by the University Rector.

2. Adequate premises and space, as well as tangible assets and human resources are available to ensure quality assurance.
3. The University Administration is particularly interested in establishing a culture of quality among internal and external stakeholders.
4. Centre's staff has undergone trainings in the scope of PICQA, DIUSAS, ARQATA programmes under TEMPUS, organised in Armenian and abroad – in Germany, France, Spain, Poland and Switzerland.

Examples of not-so-good practice

1. Members of Faculty Commissions for Quality Assessment and Assurance lack relevant experience.
2. Lack of information on culture of quality among internal and external stakeholders.
3. Number of students engaged in the quality-culture related process is insufficient.
4. Distrust on behalf of internal stakeholders with regard to studies on separate quality components and analysis of outcomes conducted by the staff of Quality Assessment and Assurance Department.

List of attachments

1. Strategy plan of YSMU 2006-2010
2. Strategy plan of YSMU 2011-1015
3. Structure of YSMU
4. Syllabuses of YSMU programs
5. Staff selection procedure
6. Procedure for Final Exams of Bachelors and Masters
7. QA policy of YSMU
8. Statute of YSMU
9. Academic Council Regulation
10. Department Staff, Lecturers' Ranks, Academic Load and Remuneration Regulation
11. Institutional self-evaluation procedure of YSMU
12. Procedure of QA of learning resources and student support services
13. Statute of student parliament
14. Procedure of monitoring of educational programs
15. PEP